

Roadmap Physiotherapist NL-BE-DE



Version: Fall 2019

General information

The profession of physiotherapist is a regulated profession in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. This means that it is not possible to work across the border without recognition.

In order to work across the border, two conditions must be met:

1. The diplomas and work experience must be recognised
2. Access to the labour market should be granted

Recognition of professional qualifications and access to the labour market are two separate steps which may also be granted by two separate authorities. Recognition is based purely on diplomas, certificates and work experience. Access to the labour market can only be granted once the qualifications have been approved. This may require additional documentation such as proof of language skills or good professional behaviour.

A physiotherapist can only start work in the Netherlands, Belgium or Germany if he/she has obtained a BIG registration, a *visum* or an *Berufsurkunde/Erlaubnis* respectively.

Procedures for the recognition of qualifications have been harmonised in the EU by means of the Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC amended by Directive 2013/55/EU).

Purpose of the roadmap

The aim of this roadmap is to provide first-line support service providers with a step-by-step plan by means of which they can better inform prospective applicants about the procedures required to be able to work across the border. The roadmap is informative in nature, no rights can be derived from it.

Guiding Questions

1. Does the person concerned have a diploma in physiotherapy or similar?

Recognition is based on the combination of diploma and work experience. If a person has neither completed training as a physiotherapist nor professional experience in that field, recognition is in principle not possible. It is advisable to contact the relevant authority before submitting an application. Please note that additional training may be required.

2. Which procedure does the individual concerned want to follow?



3. Where does the individual concerned want to work?



1. Mobility to the Netherlands

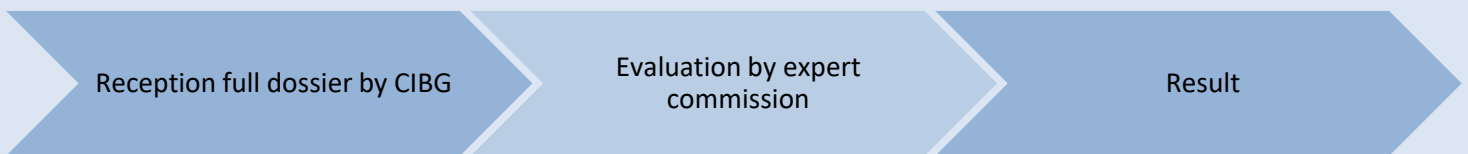
Preliminary remark

It is possible to gain experience in physiotherapy in the Netherlands prior to a recognition procedure. Under the supervision of a BIG-registered physiotherapist, one can gain such experience in the Netherlands. The position is comparable to that of an intern following a traineeship during a course of study. A person cannot call him/herself a physiotherapist, this is only possible after completion of the BIG registration.

Step 1 – Submission application for recognition

The competent authority to which applications for recognition of physiotherapists must be submitted is the CIBG. Fill in the [Application Form](#) "erkenning beroepskwalificaties en verklaring vakbekwaamheid" and the [Annex](#) "beroepscompetenties fysiotherapeuten". Submit the application by post to the CIBG or hand it in personally. The person concerned will receive a confirmation stating whether any additional documents need to be sent.

Step 2 – Processing of the dossier



The commission is responsible for dealing with the dossiers and issuing an opinion to the Minister of Health, who ultimately takes the decision to grant recognition. The Commission assesses whether there is equivalence with the learning outcomes in the "Besluit opleidingseisen en deskundigheidsgebied fysiotherapeut". The person involved can be invited to explain his/her qualifications and skills at the meeting of the commission. Recognition is based on the training, work experience and possible courses.

Step 3 – Result recognition procedure



If recognition cannot take place, compensatory measures will be imposed. Compensatory measures are imposed in case of substantial differences. In that case, the differences between the Dutch and foreign education are so great that they cannot be bridged by the work experience and possible certificates of the person concerned. In general, Belgian training shows more similarities with the Dutch training for physiotherapists. German training courses vary more. As a result, adaptation periods are more often required from German graduates than from Belgian graduates. Compensation measures, however, are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Attention!

- There are 3 procedures for recognition at the CIBG. Applicants with diplomas from EU countries follow the procedure "Erkenning van beroepskwalificaties"
- Completeness of documentation is essential: the processing time only starts with a complete file.

Costs

Recognition procedure	Free
BIG-registration	€ 85

Possible additional costs

- Certified translations (in case of documentation not in NL/EN/FR/DE)
- Costs language test
- Costs Certificate of Current Professional Status
- Costs Certificate of good conduct

Mobility to the Netherlands – Continued

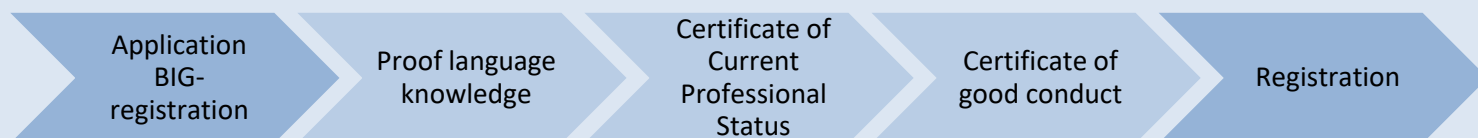
It is advisable, if possible, to take an adaptation period instead of an aptitude test: one gets to know Dutch practice with a potential future employer. The average duration of the adaptation period is 6 to 18 months, but it can take up to 3 years. At the end of the adaptation period, the CIBG will check the adaptation period. If it appears during the adaptation period that the person concerned is progressing faster, the supervisor can contact the CIBG so that a possible shortening of the adaptation period can be discussed. In the case of an adaptation period, the CIBG refers the person concerned to the internship coordinator of designated educational institutions in order to start the adaptation period. Alternatively, the aptitude test is taken at a university of applied sciences (*hbo-instelling*): the person concerned takes a knowledge test and examines a patient.

Common differences

- Specialisation of professions in neighbouring countries (NL has more general professions)
- Level differences (especially of older diplomas)

Step 4 – Labour market access

Once the recognition decision has been received, the BIG registration must be applied for in order to gain access to the labour market. After recognition, the application for registration with a diploma older than 5 years must also meet [additional requirements](#).



Explanation documents

- | | |
|---|--|
| Proof language knowledge | - Level B2 language knowledge in accordance with the Common European Training Framework of Reference for Languages is required. There are several possible ways of demonstrating language skills. Any language certificate can be delivered as long as it was issued less than 2 years ago. Alternatively, a Dutch diploma in primary or secondary education or a diploma from a Dutch course of study in physiotherapy is considered as sufficient proof of language knowledge. Does the person concerned not have any of these proofs? In that case a language test must be taken. |
| Certificate of Current Professional Status (CCPS) | - Proof that there are no restrictions to exercise the profession. The person concerned must provide a CCPS from the Member State where the diploma was obtained and from the Member States where the person concerned has worked in the profession for more than three months after obtaining the diploma. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ For Belgium the FPS Health can be contacted▪ For Germany the Landesgesundheitsamt / Landesamt can be contacted |
| Certificate of good conduct | - Proof that the person concerned does not have criminal convictions in the country where the diploma was obtained and in all countries where the person has worked in the profession for more than three months after obtaining the diploma. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ For Belgium, the municipality of the place of residence of the person concerned or the Central Criminal Record (if the person concerned does not live in Belgium) can be contacted.▪ For Germany the <i>Bundesamt für Justiz</i> can be contacted. |

Further information?

The CIBG organises [information sessions](#) where applicants can ask questions about the procedure. Nuffic is the [Dutch Assistance Centre](#) for the Professional Qualifications Directive.

Contact details authority

<i>Application by post:</i> CIBG Erkenning buitenlandse diploma's Postbus 16114 2500 BC The Hague	<i>Visitor's address:</i> CIBG Hoftoren Rijnstraat 50 2515 XP The Hague	Telephone 0900 89 98 225 (from the Netherlands) +31 70 340 66 00 (from abroad)	Website https://www.bigregister.nl/buitenlands-diploma
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2. Mobility to Belgium

Preliminary Remark

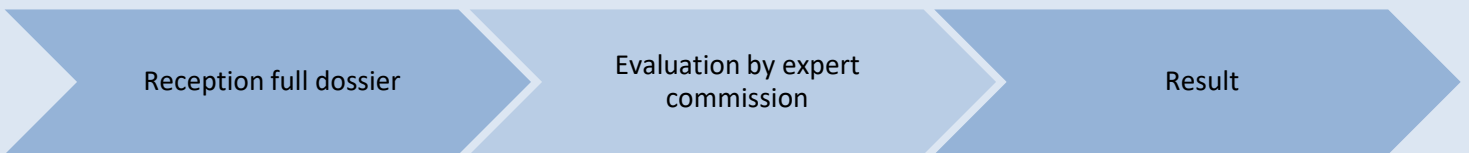
In Belgium, the competences for recognition are divided between the Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities. If a person wants to apply for recognition, he/she can contact any one of the three Communities. It does not matter in which of the three Communities one wants to work. Once recognition has been granted by one of the Communities, a *visum* valid for the whole of Belgium will be issued. However, depending on the language of the qualifications, it is advisable to apply to the Community in which the same language is spoken as the qualifications were issued to avoid translation costs. If specific questions arise, the authorities in the Belgian Communities can be contacted in advance.

Step 1 – Submission application for recognition

Submit a full application to the [Agentschap Zorg en Gezondheid](#) of the Flemish Community; or to the [Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles](#) of the French Community; or to the [Ministerie](#) of the German-speaking Community.

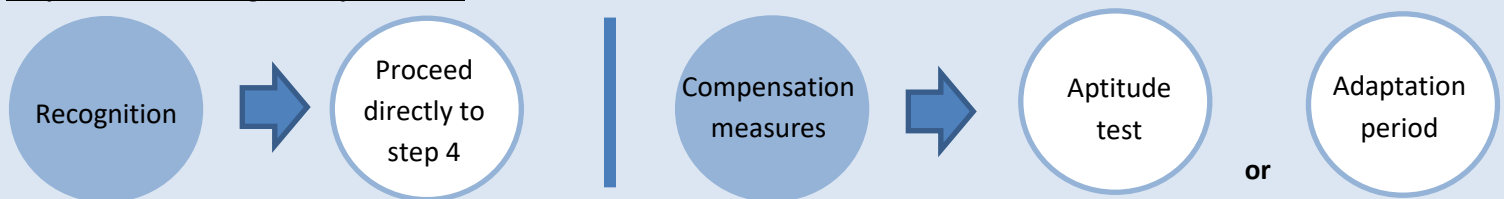
The person concerned will receive a confirmation stating whether any additional documents need to be sent.

Step 2 – Processing of the dossier



The expert commission of a Community is responsible for assessing the dossiers and issuing an opinion to the Belgian Minister of Health, who ultimately takes the decision to grant recognition. The commission assesses whether there is equivalence with criteria based on the "*Gecoördineerde wet betreffende de uitoefening van de gezondheidszorgberoepen*". Recognition is based on education, work experience and competence in the home country. In the French-speaking Community, the person concerned may be invited to elaborate on his/her qualifications and skills at the meeting of the commission.

Step 3 – Result recognition procedure



If recognition cannot take place, compensation measures will be imposed. Compensation measures are imposed in case of substantial differences. In this case, the differences between the Belgian and other Member State training are so great that they cannot be bridged by the work experience of the person concerned. In the case of compensation measures, an adaptation period is most frequently used. Compensation measures are determined on a case-by-case basis by the relevant recognition committee. This means that variations in the duration of the traineeships can occur. The maximum duration of the traineeships is three years, although in practice this period is rare.

Attention!

- Completeness of documentation is essential: the processing time only starts with a complete file.
- A recognition is valid for the whole of Belgium and is applied for in one of the three Communities. It is not possible to submit an application in more than one Community.

Costs

Recognition procedure	Free
<i>Visum</i>	Free

Possible additional costs

- Certified translations (in case of documentation not in NL/FR/DE)
- Certificate of good conduct
- Certificate of conformity
- Certificate of a disciplinary authority

Mobility to Belgium – Continued

It is important to note that the procedures for adaptation periods are different in the three Belgian Communities. For example, in the Flemish and German-speaking communities, it is possible to apply for recognition with the authority after completion of the adaptation period. In the French Community the authority must approve the traineeship before the start of the adaptation period. The individual concerned must specify the supervisor and the institution where the adaptation period will be followed. At the end of the adaptation period, the traineeship must be approved, after which it can be recognised.

Common differences

Differences in the duration of internships and practical experience.

Explanation selection documents

- | | |
|--|--|
| Certificate of good conduct | - For the Netherlands, Justis can be contacted.
- For Germany, the Bundesamt für Justiz can be contacted. |
| Certificate of conformity Directive 2005/36/EC | - Declaration of competence in the country of origin <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the Netherlands the CIBG can be contacted.• For Germany, the Landesgesundheitsamt / Landesamt can be contacted |
| Certificate of a disciplinary authority | - Statement confirming that no disciplinary action has been taken against the person concerned <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the Netherlands the CIBG can be contacted.• For Germany, the Landesgesundheitsamt / Landesamt can be contacted |

Step 4 – Labour market access

In order to work in Belgium, a *visum* is required in addition to recognition. This *visum* is issued by the Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment. As soon as the authority in the relevant Community has taken a positive decision on recognition, a signal is automatically sent to the Federal Public Service that issues the *visum*. It is not necessary to submit a further application for this or to provide additional information. With the *visum*, the person concerned can work throughout Belgium. No proof of language skills is required; it is up to the employer to check this.

Further information?

Be-assist is the [Belgian Assistance Centre](#) for the Professional Qualifications Directive.

Contact details authorities

Flemish Community	French Community	German-speaking Community
Agentschap Zorg en Gezondheid Afdeling Informatie en Zorgberoepen Koning Albert II laan 35 1030 Brussels	Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles Adolphe Lavalléestraat 1 1080 Brussels	Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Gospertstraße 1 4700 Eupen
+32 (0) 1700	+32 (0)2 690 8920 (Thursdays 9-12)	+32 (0)87 876 759
mailvragen.zorgberoepen@zorg-en-gezondheid.be	agreementsante@cfwb.be	Anerkennung.gesundheitsberufe@dgov.be
https://www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/	http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=27056	http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-5491/9449_read-51093/

3. Mobility to Germany

Preliminary remark

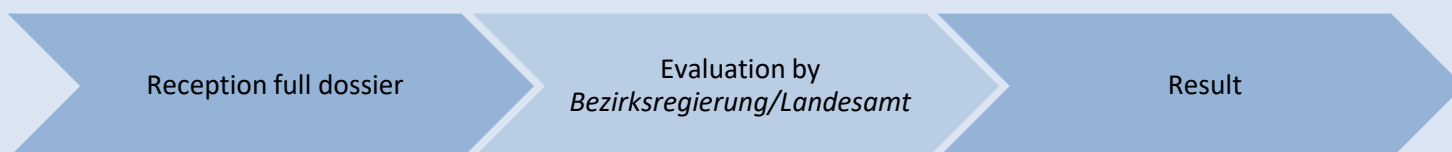
In Germany, recognition is often organised per *Bundesland*. This means that – depending on where the person concerned wants to work – there is a different authority. The focus in this roadmap is on the *Bundesländer* that border on the Netherlands (North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and Lower Saxony (Nds.)). Where information is provided that relates to one of the two *Bundesländer*, this is specifically indicated. Will the person in question work somewhere else? Consult the website anerkennung-in-deutschland.de to find the right competent authority.

Step 1 – Submission application for recognition

- Submit a full application
- At the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf* in case of mobility to North Rhine-Westphalia:
 - With a [NL diploma](#)
 - With another [EU diploma](#)
 - At the *Landesamt für Soziales, Jugend und Familie* in case of mobility to Lower Saxony with an [EU diploma](#)

The person concerned will receive a confirmation stating whether any additional documents need to be sent.

Step 2 – Processing of the dossier



Authorities assess whether there is equivalence with the learning outcomes in the “*Gesetz über die Berufe in der Physiotherapie (Masseur- und Physiotherapeutengesetz – MPhG)*”. Recognition is mainly based on training and work experience.

Step 3 – Result recognition procedure



If recognition cannot take place, compensation measures will be imposed. Compensation measures are imposed in case of substantial differences. In this case, the differences between German and foreign training are so great that they cannot be bridged by the professional experience of the person concerned.

Attention!

- Completeness of documentation is essential: the processing time only starts with a complete file.
- Please note that in Germany more detailed information about the content of the training is generally requested (e.g. content of courses and number of hours). Completeness accelerates the procedure.

Costs

	NRW	Nds.
Recognition procedure	€ 150-350	Approx. €200*
<i>Berufsurkunde/Erlaubnis</i>	Approx. € 60	€ 53

Possible additional costs

- Certified translations (NRW in case of documentation not in DE/EN | Nds. in case of documentation not in DE)
- Costs proof health status and reliability

*Possible additional costs in case of evaluation by the [Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen \(ZAB\)](#)

Mobility to Germany – Continued

North Rhine-Westphalia

The *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf* uses separate criteria for Dutch physiotherapy diplomas. Given the extensive experience of the *Bezirksregierung* with these diplomas, the content of the training is considered only globally. This means that recognition for physiotherapists trained in the Netherlands is almost automatic. As a result, the procedure often takes less than the maximum period of 4 months (approx. 1 month) and no compensation measures are usually requested. In general, these can still occur with old training courses. In the case of compensation measures, the *Bezirksregierung* refers the person concerned to an educational institution in order to set the measure in motion. The adaptation periods consist of theory and practice and are structured by means of modules. The aptitude test can be taken at very short notice (approx. 2 weeks) and consists of a patient examination.

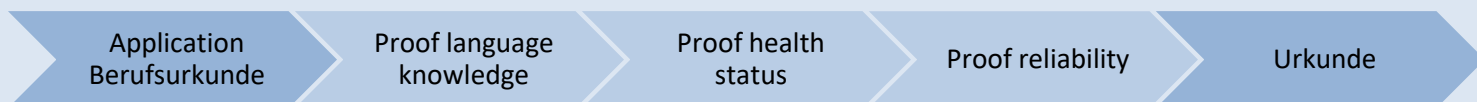
Step 4 – Labour market access

North Rhine-Westphalia

After recognition by the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf*, it is necessary to apply for the *Berufsurkunde/Erlaubnis* from the [Gesundheitsämter](#) for access to the labour market.

Lower Saxony

Both recognition and the *Berufsurkunde/Erlaubnis* are granted by the *Landesamt*.



Explanation documents

Proof language knowledge - As a rule, a level of B2 language proficiency is required.

Proof health status - For example by a doctor's certificate.

Proof reliability - For example by a certificate of good conduct.

- For [Belgium](#), the municipality of the place of residence of the person concerned or the Central Criminal Record (if the person concerned does not live in Belgium) can be contacted.
- For the [Netherlands](#), the municipality of the place of residence of the person concerned or Justis (if the person concerned does not live in the Netherlands) can be contacted

Further information?

The [IQ-Netzwerk](#) offers national advisory services for persons with foreign qualifications looking for recognition. The *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* is the [German Assistance Centre](#) for the Professional Qualifications Directive.

Contact details authorities

North Rhine-Westphalia

Application by post:

Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf
Landesprüfungsamt für Medizin,
Psychotherapie und Pharmazie
Postfach 30 08 65
40408 Düsseldorf

Visitor's address:

Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf
Am Bonnhof 35
40474 Düsseldorf

+49 (0)211 475 4265 (mon 13:00-14:30, wed 8:30-11:30)

Dez24.heilberufe@brd.nrw.de

http://www.brd.nrw.de/gesundheit_soziales/LPA-NAH-Start/index.jsp

Lower Saxony

Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Soziales, Jugend und Familie
Außenstelle Lüneburg
Postfach 2280
21312 Lüneburg

+49 (0) 4131 150 (mon-thur 9-15, fr 9-12)

4SL3@ls.niedersachsen.de

https://soziales.niedersachsen.de/startseite/soziales_gesundheit/gesundheit_und_pflege/nichtaerztliche_heilberufe/

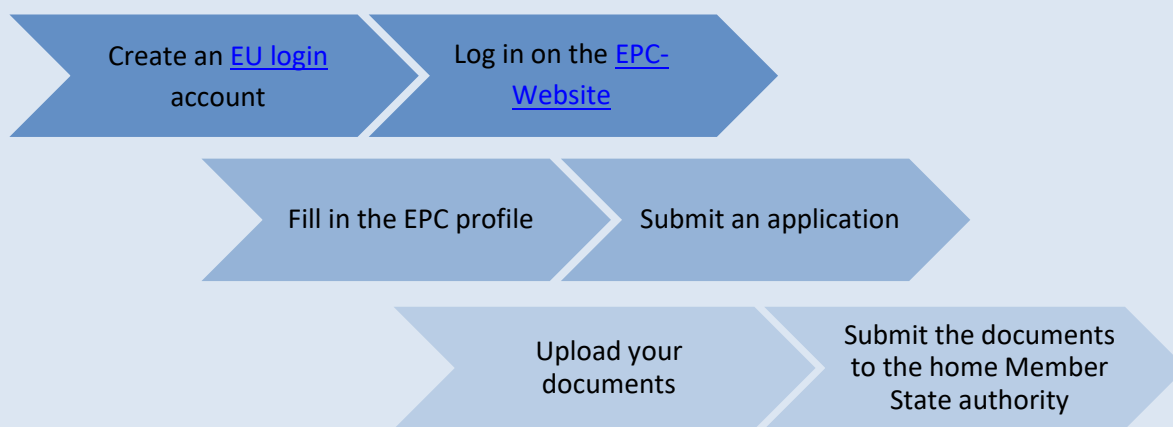
4. European Professional Card

What is it?

The European Professional Card – EPC is another way to go through the traditional recognition procedure under the Professional Qualifications Directive. Please note that this is not a physical card, but an electronic certificate. The application for the professional card runs through the EU's Internal Market Information System (IMI system). The card is available for a selection of professions, including physiotherapists.

The home country authority confirms the validity of the documents. The authority in the host Member State no longer has to validate them and can start directly with the substantive evaluation of the qualifications. Behind the scenes, the EPC procedure is the same as the traditional one.

How does it work?



Benefits



Quick validation

Because the documentation is validated by the home Member State authority, the procedure is sped up.



Preservation documentation

In the case of mobility to another EU country, the documentation is preserved.



Recognition in case of violation time limits

If the authority in the host Member State does not take a decision in time (within 2, max. 3 months), the EPC and thus recognition will be granted.

Attention!

The European Professional Card only covers the recognition procedure and is not a substitute for a BIG registration, *Visum* or *Berufsurkunde/Erlaubnis*. This means that physiotherapists who want to work in the Netherlands, Belgium or Germany still have to go through the labour market access procedure after the EPC procedure (i.e. step 4 on the previous pages has to be done after the EPC procedure).

Further information?

Consult the [Your Europe Portal](#). Here you will find all the information about the EPC as well as a simulator indicating which documents you need to upload as well as an estimate of the costs associated with an application.