

# **Crossing Borders and the Portugal Agreement**

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# **Free movement of health professionals: The Current Situation**

# Mobility of Health Professionals in Europe

- **Increasing professional mobility of regulated health professionals in Europe**
- **Between 2003-6:**
  - over **21,000** EEA practitioners have registered to practice in UK.
  - **1,412** EEA doctors, nurses & dentists registered with National Authority for Medico-legal Affairs, Finland.
- **16,844 EEA doctors registered to practice in Germany in 2004 – 2005**
- **Over 9,454 German doctors registered in 16 other European countries between 2001-2005**
- **2,343 practitioners registered in Netherlands from other parts of the EEA in 2003-5\***
- **13,132 EEA professionals registered with the Norwegian Registration Authority for Health Personnel between 2005-2006.**

\*Figure only includes dentists, doctors, pharmacists, midwives and nurses

## Patient safety in Europe

- Most healthcare practitioners are very safe and highly competent professionals.
- EU healthcare benefits immensely from movement of skills and expertise.
- European Single Market can positively contribute high quality health care in the EU.

### ***But***

- Anecdotal evidence - about 5% of doctors may have impaired practice\*.
- A very small minority of practitioners are known to move jurisdictions to attempt to avoid home state regulatory control.

\* UK Department of Health 2002 – Health Check on the state of public health

# European health services – the regulatory perspective

# The regulatory dimension of safe and high quality healthcare in Europe

- High quality health care in Europe needs safe and competent health practitioners.
- Good healthcare regulation can contribute to high quality healthcare.
- Patients crossing borders for health care need assurance that practitioners are safe and of a high quality.
- Patients need clarity of regulatory redress.
- Regulators need assurance of professionals' fitness to practise.
- Professionals must not exploit European Single Market to avoid regulatory control and disciplinary action.

## **The Initiative: Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders**

**WHO?:** Regulatory Authorities of all regulated health professions from across the EEA.

**WHAT?:** Collaborate and coordinate activity of information exchange and regulatory issues.

**HOW?:** Delivering a range of collaborative approaches to information exchange – Edinburgh Agreement.

**WHEN?:** Established in 2005 by the UK Government during EU Presidency – Today led on behalf of all European regulators by the UK General Medical Council and AURE.

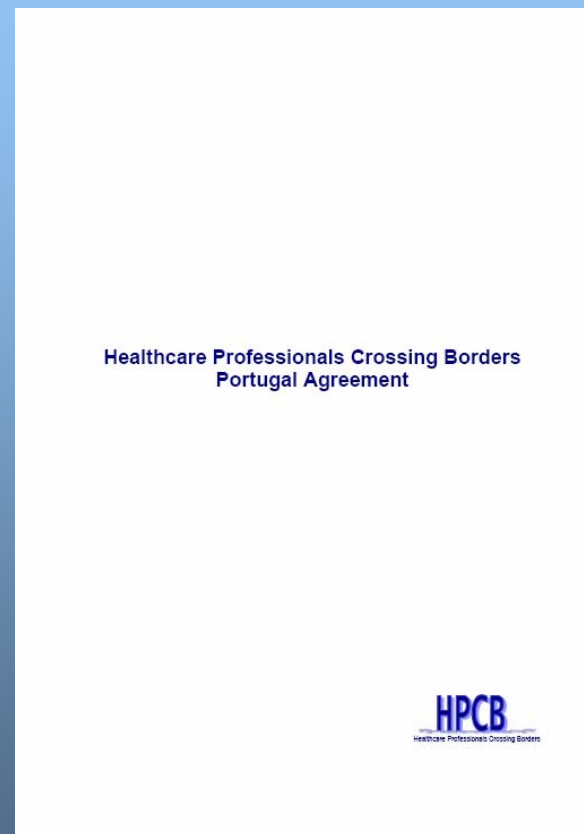
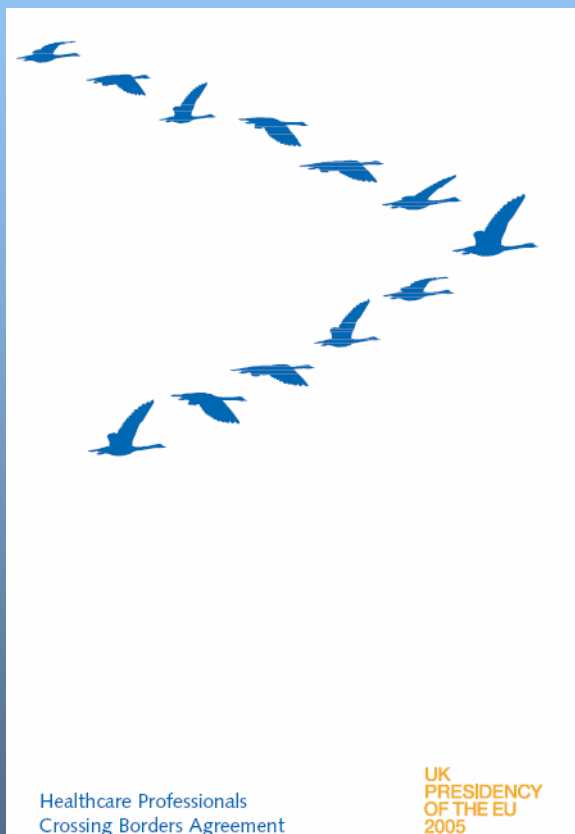
**WHY?:** Contribute to patient safety in Europe.

## **Objective:**

# **Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders**

- **Facilitate easier professional mobility:** closer collaboration & better information exchange between competent authorities.
- **Contribute to patient safety:** enabling host regulators to obtain assurance of registrants' fitness to practise by improved information exchange.
- **Good practice and coordination:** closer collaboration and cooperation between competent authorities on health regulatory issues.

# HPCB Agreements – Edinburgh & Portugal



# The 2005 Edinburgh Agreement

- 9 key actions for better collaboration and cooperation between competent authorities including:
  - European template for Certificate of Current Professional Status.
  - Agreements to share information on a case-by-case and proactive information sharing to improve assurance of current fitness to practice and patient safety.
  - Promotion of the [www.healthregulation.org](http://www.healthregulation.org) web portal for links to competent authorities.
  - Building a foundation of improved inter-professional European networking between health competent authorities.

## Outputs since January 2006

- Increasing use of Certificate of Current Professional Status (or CGS adaptation)
- Development of MOU on Case by Case and Proactive Information exchange
- 7 working group meetings to action Edinburgh Agreement including:
  - EU-wide meeting, Helsinki Oct 2006
  - EU-wide meeting Berlin, Feb 2007
  - EU-wide meeting Portugal, Oct 2007
- 9 issues of HPCB Update Briefing
- Promotion of HPCB and health regulation website through a range of European level events and presentations.
- Recognition of HPCB initiative in 2007 European Parliament text

# Developing a post-Edinburgh Agreement

## Main pillars of Portugal Agreement:

- Identifying shared principles of regulation
- Transparent and accessible healthcare regulation
- Competence assurance of European healthcare professionals

# Identifying Shared Principles of Regulation

- Aims to identify a common purpose for regulation across Europe
- Enable the pursuit of safe and high quality practice as the focus of health regulation across Europe,
- Considered the role of good regulation and how this could contribute to the development of effective professional healthcare regulation in Europe.

# Transparent and Accessible Healthcare Regulation

- Developing greater visibility of regulation for patients and the public.
- Open a debate on what patients and the public need to know about regulation, in the context of increasing patient mobility.
- Continuing work on CCPS and MOU implementation.

# Competence Assurance of European Healthcare Professionals

- Consideration of competence assurance tools from across healthcare regulation.
- Learning from global good practice.
- Raising awareness of professional codes and standards.

## Delivering on Portugal

- Achieved consensus at Lisbon conference  
8 October 2007
- Agreeing actions for collaboration between all  
European healthcare regulators
- Agreeing appropriate mechanism for implementation  
by 2009.

## Recent and Forthcoming Activities

## HPCB website – January 2008

The screenshot shows the HPCB website homepage. At the top right, there are links for 'accessibility', 'site map', 'contact us', and a language selector for 'Française'. The main header features the 'HPCB' logo and the tagline 'Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders'. Below this is a navigation menu with links for 'ABOUT US', 'NEWS & EVENTS', 'MEETINGS', 'WHO'S WHO', 'ACTMITIES', and 'LINKS'. The main content area has a title 'Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders' and a large map of Europe. To the left of the map is a photograph of a healthcare professional interacting with a child. Below the map and photo is a descriptive paragraph about HPCB's purpose. At the bottom, there are three columns: 'LATEST NEWS' with a newspaper icon, 'CONTACT US' with a hand holding a globe icon, and 'PORTUGAL AGREEMENT' with a handshake icon.

accessibility | site map | contact us | Française

# HPCB

Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders

ABOUT US | NEWS & EVENTS | MEETINGS | WHO'S WHO | ACTMITIES | LINKS

## Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders



Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders (HPCB) is an informal partnership of professional healthcare regulators from within Europe that works collaboratively on a range of regulatory issues.

The purpose is to contribute to patient safety in Europe through the effective regulatory collaboration in the context of cross-border healthcare and free movement of healthcare professionals.

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### LATEST NEWS



For the latest news about Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders, see [Latest News](#).

### CONTACT US



To get in touch with the Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders initiative see [Contact Us](#).

### PORTUGAL AGREEMENT



The Portugal Agreement is the initiative's collaborative work programme for professional healthcare regulators in Europe. See [Portugal Agreement](#).

## European Parliament Round-table Event



Photo Credits: European Parliament

## Forthcoming meetings

- 30 May: Oslo, Norway, Case by Case and Proactive Information Exchange
- 30 June: HPCB Spring meeting, The Hague, Netherlands

**For further information**

**[www.hpcb.eu](http://www.hpcb.eu)**

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