



## European Prosthodontic Association Speciality Recognition

### Background

The European Prosthodontic Association (EPA) was established in 1977, when the first conference was held after an idea of a group of European Prosthodontic Specialists. Its objectives are to further knowledge and promote the teaching and practice of Prosthodontics in Europe. The association arranges annual conferences within Europe ([www.epadental.org/aboutus/constitution](http://www.epadental.org/aboutus/constitution) )

The background was that there was a need to develop understanding and improve communication in the field of Prosthodontics among European countries. Information was required on undergraduate and postgraduate prosthodontics teaching, with special reference to the conditions within the EU, where specialist practitioners from one country may practice in another.

Specialist authorisation in Prosthodontics was first established in the USA in 1948. Today, about 50 countries worldwide have a legally authorised speciality in prosthodontics/prosthetic dentistry. In Europe the first country to establish a speciality was Croatia (1970). Today 20 European countries have a legally authorised specialty in Prosthodontics.

### EPA speciality development

Initiated by the EPA, a meeting between members and leaders in Prosthodontics, representing 13 countries with different speciality situations was held in Copenhagen ([www.epadental.org](http://www.epadental.org); Öwall et al, Eur J Prosthodont Rest Dent 2006). Later reports from that conference have been published in national journals (e.g. Denmark, Öwall, Isidor, Tandlægebladet 2007; Turkey, Öwall et al, J Izmir Dent Ass 2006; Poland, Wilson, Öwall, Protet Stomatol 2009). The consensus statements of the meeting are that:

- Patients today should benefit from the fast development in treatment techniques and material sciences in prosthodontics that, in some circumstances, are best provided within a specialist framework.
- The undergraduate dental curricula are designed to provide a range of basic abilities across the spectrum of prosthodontic care, but do not include proficiency in all aspects. This may be provided by continuous professional development and specialist training.
- The need for specialist training in prosthodontics is being recognised in most countries in Europe. Formal specialised training has been introduced and acknowledged by professional societies and government bodies in many of them.
- These programs have many similarities in duration, defined entrance points, content, and expected level of proficiency on completion and use of external moderation.
- There would be considerable advantages in harmonisation of this process in prosthodontics on a European basis for improving the quality of patient treatment and freedom of movement by prosthodontic specialists within the EU.

The EPA has approached the European Commission, Internal Market and Services DG, and Regulated Professions Secretariat, which is the office in charge of EU recognition of medical and dental specialities. An automatic recognition, like the one in Orthodontics and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, was requested with the motive that Prosthodontics has moved from part of general dentistry to a speciality with a complexity that is on an equal level as those two specialities. Moreover, the arguments presented in the publication "Specialisation and Specialist Education in Prosthetic Dentistry in Europe" (Öwall et al 2006) were presented. The European Commission now only has a responsibility to add more specialities to the list of "automatic recognition" (and will only do so) if there is a clear demonstrable problem of free movement within the EU of regulated professionals. Dental Specialists, legally authorised in an EU country, are included in this definition. It seems obvious that the status of Orthodontics and Maxillofacial Surgery has an historical background and is not based on these regulations. It is envisaged that the EU is unlikely to make further additions of dental specialities to the list.



## The EPA Speciality

Considering the urgent need for raising the status of the speciality of Prosthodontics, the EPA has decided to introduce an Association Recognition of Prosthodontic Specialists based on the following principles:

- **1.** Automatic recognition of any prosthodontic specialist legally authorised by a government or professional body in a European country (in the same way as EC (EU) now recognises a medical or dental specialist in the listed specialities - for dentistry only Orthodontics and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery).
- **2.** “Direct recognition” of prosthodontic specialists that have passed well-documented training programs (minimum 3 years or equivalent) that have been judged by the EPA to have a standard that is of the same level as those in countries with legal recognition.
- **3.** Individual recognition after evaluation by the EPA Specialisation Committee

A certificate will be given for Recognition as an EPA Specialist in Prosthodontics.

To obtain recognition, membership of the EPA is mandatory and administrative costs must be paid.

A list of “active specialists” will be published on the EPA website, of those who are members of EPA.

Recognition is for life, unless the dentist is erased from the register or loses specialist recognition in any European country.

EPA Recognised Specialists will be expected to follow the legal and dental association regulations in the respective countries in which they practice. Specialist status will be named “EPA Recognised Specialist in Prosthodontics”. Equivalent terms to Prosthodontics are allowed according the standard in the individual countries (e.g. Prosthetic Dentistry, Oral Rehabilitation). A Recognised Specialist may advertise their status in English or a relevant European language.

## References:

<http://www.epadental.org>

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