

# EUROPEAN BACKGROUND INFORMATION COMMUNITY

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BACKGROUND NOTE

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## NOW EURODOCTORS

Physicians -- specialists as well as general practitioners -- who meet one EC member country's professional standards can now practise anywhere in the Community.

On December 20, the medical profession became the first profession for which "freedom of establishment" has been achieved. Blue collar and clerical workers have been able to take jobs in any other member country besides their own without any national restrictions since July 1968, but professionals have not been able to exercise the same right. Diplomas and other certificates of professional competence, and training leading up to their award, have varied widely from member state to member state, and agreement on their relative values took a long time to secure.

To solve the problem of mutual recognition of diplomas and to secure their real equivalence, the European Communities' Council of Ministers, in July 1975, passed directives setting qualitative and quantitative criteria for the training of physicians. For example, general training is to include at least six years of study or 5,500 hours of theoretical and practical instruction in a university, or under university supervision. For specialists, additional training varies from three to five years, depending on the speciality. The content of training programs was not set, in the belief that what matters is not the same training methods but the same results.

The Commission believes that the methods used to solve the problem of recognition of diplomas could be applied to achieve freedom of establishment for other professions. Now pending in Council are proposals for freedom of establishment for lawyers, architects, accountants, nurses, midwives, veterinarians, dentists, and engineers.