

**International exchange of experience and good practice
in the field of professional education and recognition of health and social care professions
based on the project European JobGuide Alps region**

Group discussion – Group 2: social care professions

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Main aspects discussed:

1. Regulation of social care professions in general

- Generally social care professions are less regulated compared to health care professions.
- As labour force is mostly demanded locally and for very specific purposes, which requires a good command of language(s) as well as cultural proficiency, the competent jurisdiction for professions and activity fields is partially in hands of the federal states or regions (e.g. Austria or South Tyrol).
- The example of Czech Republic, where only the profession „Socialni prace“ is regulated at national level, illustrates that some EU-12 member states still need to adapt their system of professional education within the field of social care professions.

2. Different levels of professional education

- Professional education within the social care professions is offered at different levels, from vocational training (dual system) over technical colleges and academies up to university education (and thus from upper secondary to tertiary level).
- The general reorganisation of education to the level of universities of applied sciences (tertiary-A) is taking place but relatively slowly in most countries. This often goes along with a lower prestige of the respective professions.

3. Discussion of concrete recognition processes

- Regarding the recognition of social care professions, besides differences in the level of education also different contents of professional/training profiles become relevant:
 - The “Social assistant“ („Sozialbetreuer“) in South Tyrol is a generalist profession¹, while in Austria the same profession is covered by 4 specialisations² (at different educational levels), which results in altogether 8 different professional profiles.

¹ This profession comprises social and psychosocial assistance, (health)care and pedagogic components.

² There are specifications in elderly care, family care, care of disabled persons and assistance for disabled persons.

- Due to divergent systems of professional education, the professional recognition partially implicates a degradation of qualifications.
 - For an elderly care nurse (“Altenpfleger/in”) from Germany, Switzerland can only recognise his/her competences in the field of care (level 1 of the diploma of a “Fachperson Gesundheit” in Switzerland), which brings about an auxiliary activity if this person is to work in Switzerland.
 - Further education and specification modules, which in some countries are still offered at academy or technical school level, can hardly be recognised, e.g. in the case of Switzerland.
- Compensatory measures that are offered to obtain the recognition of professional titles (e.g. updating trainings, practical experience, aptitude tests) should be flexible and adaptable to the professional background of the applying person.