

Fact sheet: Norway's handling of Hungary trained psychology graduates

Background

ESA has received 4 formal complaints from psychology graduates after Norwegian authorities denied their applications for recognition of Master's degrees in Clinical and Health Psychology from the ELTE University in Hungary.

For 13 years, ELTE graduates needed to complete one year of supervised work on a licence in Norway to be granted an authorisation to practise as a psychologist. Many of them are now employed in the Norwegian health care system.

Norway changed this practice in April 2016 without any transitional measures or any prior announcement. Consequently, 50 ELTE graduates had their applications to work under supervision rejected. The Norwegian Directorate of Health also told 16 already working under supervision they would be denied the subsequent authorisation to work as psychologists.

Further, when Norway discontinued its recognition practice, 187 Norwegian students were admitted to or had been accepted to psychology studies at ELTE.

ESA's assessment

ESA assesses the complaints on the basis of EEA law, specifically [Directive 2005/36](#) on the recognition of professional qualifications, [Directive 2006/123](#) on services in the Internal Market, Article 28 in the [EEA Agreement](#) on the free movement of workers and Article 31 of the EEA Agreement on the freedom of establishment.

In ESA's view, the Norwegian authorities have not provided adequate justification for abruptly discontinuing the recognition system. Therefore, ESA has issued a letter of formal notice to launch infringement proceedings against Norway.

In ESA's view, Norwegian authorities have in a number of cases also exceeded a four-month deadline when deciding on students' applications for professional recognition. Norway has further failed to provide an appeal procedure for when the authorities exceed the deadline of four months.

Procedure

A letter of formal notice is the first step in an infringement procedure against an EFTA State. Norway has three months to reply to the letter before ESA will decide whether to pursue the case further with a reasoned opinion.

ESA has received three similar complaints connected to Norway's discontinuation of the recognition of psychology degrees from Poland. It also has received complaints from people holding a Spanish psychology qualification, a Lithuanian one and a Dutch one. ESA is currently looking into these complaints.