

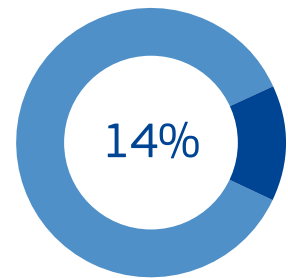


ANALYTICAL HIGHLIGHT

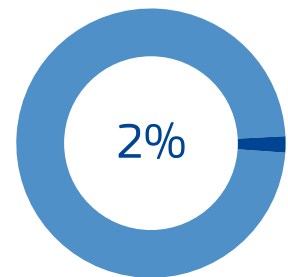
PROSPECTS FOR Health professionals

- Health professionals¹ comprise 14% of all professional workers and 2% of the total EU-28 workforce. From 2003 to 2013, their number grew as a proportion of total EU-28 employment, but fell relative to all professional occupations.
- Health professionals are the highest-qualified of all the occupational groups, reflecting the highly-skilled and professionalised nature of these roles
- A key issue for health professionals is widespread recruitment difficulties, particularly given the specialised skills profile. These challenges are likely to increase in the period to 2025.
- Specific technical expertise in medical and related fields dominates skills demanded of health professionals, alongside more general competences in personal service, management and counselling skills.

▼ Figure 1a – Health professionals share of professionals occupational group, EU-28, 2013



▼ Figure 1b – Health professionals share of total employment, EU-28, 2013



Source: Cedefop forecasts (2014)

Source: Cedefop forecasts (2014)

WHAT DO THEY DO?

Health professionals are a sub group of the wider occupational group of Professionals². They establish and undertake research, and develop and apply scientific knowledge in a range of health and related fields including: medicine, complementary medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, optometry, environmental health and occupational health.

Specific occupations within the health professionals group include: doctors; nursing and midwifery professionals; complementary medicine professionals; paramedics; veterinarians; opticians; dentists; speech therapists; dieticians; psychiatrists, and; other health professionals, such as, environmental health officers.

The tasks undertaken by health profession-

als involve: conducting research and obtaining scientific knowledge through the study of human and animal disorders; diagnosing illnesses and ways of treating them; the planning, management and evaluation of the care of patients; advising on or dispensing and applying preventive and curative measures; promoting health; and, preparing scientific papers and reports. Supervision of other workers is usual³.

Employment outlook

Health professionals account for 14% of all professional workers and 2% of all employment in the EU-28 (see Figures 1a and 1b). The share of health professionals within EU-28 employment grew modestly from 2003 to 2013, and at a much slower pace than other non-health professional occupations.

However, there are specific health professional occupations that have seen recent increases in employment. Other health professionals, nurses and midwives, were amongst the top 25 growth occupations across the EU-28 during 2011-12. These groups, alongside doctors, were also among the top 25 occupations for hiring growth. Doctors were also a top 25 occupation for youth hirings over this period.

At national level, from 2008 to 2010, health professionals (except nursing) were amongst the top 25 growth occupations in Denmark, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom⁴. From 2011 to 2012, nursing professionals were amongst the top 25 growth occupations in the Czech Republic, Denmark, France and Portugal.

Unsurprisingly, most health professionals work in the human health and social work sector (82% in 2013). However, some health professionals (7%), notably pharmacists, can be found in the retail sector. The number of health professionals in each of these sectors grew by almost 12% from 2003 to 2008. More recently, from 2008 to 2013, while the expansion of health professionals working in retail continued at a similar pace, growth in the number working in the core health sector slowed down to around 2%.

Health professionals are the highest-qualified of all occupational groups (see Table 1 below). Almost nine out of ten health professionals hold a high-level qualification, and the number of health professionals holding low-level qualifications is negligible. This qualifications profile has remained fairly stable over the last decade, with only a small increase in the proportion of health professionals with medium-level qualifications being apparent.

▼ **Table 1 – Share of Health professionals by qualification level compared to all occupations, EU-28, 2013**

	Low	Medium	High
Health professionals	0.7%	12.5%	86.9%
All occupations	21.2%	48.1%	30.7%

Source: Cedefop forecasts (2014)

Many EU-28 countries are experiencing recruitment difficulties, most notably in specialist medical practitioners, nursing professionals and generalist medical practitioners where at least seven countries identified problems. In all, recruitment difficulties were reported in thirteen specific health professional occupation groups. A key issue is that some health professionals choose to work in other occupations largely due to low pay levels⁵. There is also a regional dimension to some shortages. The

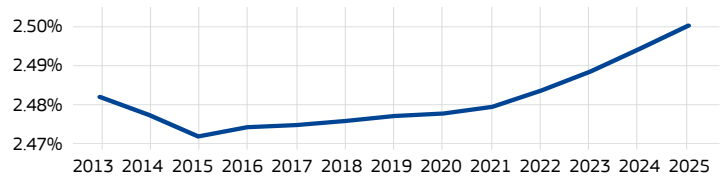
EVRP report⁶ identifies structural issues, as many East European health professionals choose to work in countries where pay levels are higher.

A look into the future

Whilst there is a small initial decline expected in the proportion of health professionals in the European labour market, the number is forecast to steadily rise to 2025.

Numerically there will be continuous but modest growth (4.1%) from 2013 to 2025, which is about half the rate for professionals as a whole.

▼ **Figure 2 – Future share of Health professionals, EU-28**



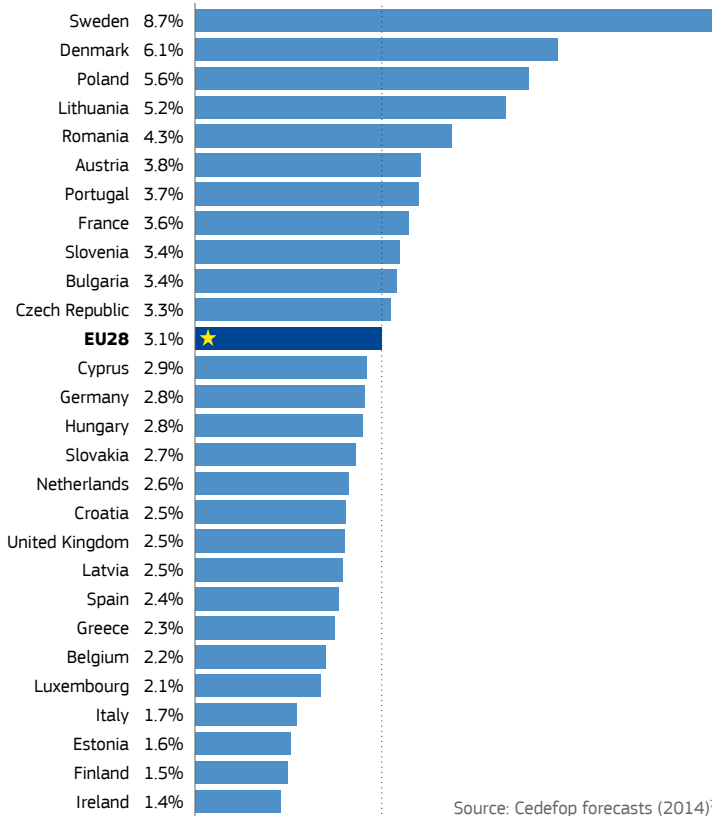
Source: Cedefop forecasts (2014)

Over three million job openings are predicted from 2013 to 2025. The large majority of these (93%) will be to replace people leaving due to retirement or for other reasons. An expected 228,000 new health professional jobs will be created during this period. Much of this growth is anticipated for health professionals working outside of the traditional health sector. For example, the number of health professionals working in the retail sector is forecast to increase by around 40% over the next decade. There is also expected to be an increase in the number of health professional jobs requiring medium-level qualifications (+38% from 2013 to 2025).

The number of health professional jobs is forecast to increase in all but six EU-28 countries from 2013 to 2025 – the exceptions being Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The overall expansion in health professional jobs is slightly above the EU-28 average for all occupations.

Taking account of the need to replace workers who retire or leave the occupation for other reasons, it is estimated that 3.1% of all job openings across the EU-28 from 2013 to 2025 will be for health professionals. This rises to over 5% of jobs in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Poland and Lithuania (see Figure 3).

▼ Figure 3 – Share of Health professionals in total job openings by country, EU-28, 2013-2025



Source: Cedefop forecasts (2014)⁷

Skills challenges

Health professionals must have, and be formally qualified in, the information and techniques of their particular branch of health in order to diagnose and treat human (and animal) injuries and diseases. This includes understanding symptoms, treatments and their alternatives, proactive and preventative health care measures^{8,9}. In addition to these occupational specific skills and competencies, health professionals increasingly need a range of social, management and business skills, and understanding of a range of specialist equipment:

- **Customer and personal service:** Including customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
- **Administration and management:** Strategic planning, resource allocation, leadership, and coordination of people and resources.
- **Therapy and counselling:** Principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental conditions, injuries and diseases.
- **Psychology, sociology and anthropology:** Knowledge of individual and group behaviour and dynamics; individual abilities, personalities, learning and motivation; societal trends and influences, human ethnicity and culture.
- **Active learning, listening and comprehension:** Understanding oral and written information, its interpretation and implications.

- **Communication skills:** Excellent oral and written expression and comprehension skills; presentation skills, generally and in the specific technical discipline.

The main skills drivers for health professionals over the next 10 years will be financial, organisational, legislative, demographic and technological. Several of these are interlinked. The pressure on public sector funding is increasingly requiring health organisations in many countries to increase productivity and achieve efficiencies. This, in turn, is leading to organisational changes affecting the division of roles between certain health professions (e.g. doctors, nurses and pharmacists), as well as the division of tasks between health professionals and associate health professionals.

The management of long-term health conditions in the context of the ageing European population is driving new approaches to the delivery of health care, which is increasingly integrated with social care provision within the community. This creates new roles and new demands for health professionals' work within multi-disciplinary teams.

In addition, health services are developing more customer-focused approaches, in particular, creating more choice in health service delivery. As most health services are publicly funded, political and legislative changes will undoubtedly affect the ways in which health professionals deliver their services, and the skills and competencies they require.

Demographic changes will increase the demand for particular health professional disciplines, especially in those aspects of health care relating to older people and throughout the life span, given the emphasis on preventative care¹⁰.

Bioscience, technology and pharmaceuticals are increasing the understanding of the human body and mind, and the ways in which injuries, conditions and diseases can be prevented and treated. Health professionals will be required to keep abreast of these developments as they manifest themselves in new equipment, treatments and prevention¹¹. ■

1 Defined as ISCO-08 Group 22 Health Professionals
 2 ISCO Major Occupational Group 2 – Professionals
 3 International Labour Organization (2012), International standard classification of occupations structure, group definitions and correspondence tables: ISCO-08 Volume 1
 4 European Commission (2014), European vacancy and recruitment report
 5 European Commission (2014), Mapping and analysing bottleneck vacancies in EU labour markets: Overview report final
 6 European Commission (2014), European vacancy and recruitment report
 7 Malta excluded due to data restrictions
 8 O*Net (2014)
 9 Rosso, A., Civitelli, G., and Marceca, M., Annali Di Igiene: Medicina Preventiva E Di Comunità, (Jul-Aug 2012) Vol. 24 (4), pp. 263-7, Global health, international health and public health: which relationship?
 10 European Commission (2012), Commission staff working document on an action plan for the EU health workforce
 11 Skills for Health (2011), UK Sector Skills Assessment

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