



To: Health Commission of the Congress of Deputies

Brussels, 23 March 2022

In 2006, the European Association for Professions in Biomedical Science (EPBS) carried out a survey on the educational standards of Biomedical scientists in Europe and in 2009 the EPBS General Governing Body approved its Education Policy. The summary of this policy is:

- The minimum education standard for Biomedical Scientists acceptable for EPBS is a degree or 1st cycle level (180 -240 ECTS) under the Bologna Process
- Progress towards Master and Doctoral degrees should be an integral part of the education and training of biomedical scientists

To achieve these objectives, EPBS is taking steps to guarantee access to Master's programs through a joint initiative with four higher education institutions to offer an Erasmus Joint Master Degree in Biomedical Laboratory Sciences (EMJMD-MARBLE).

Last year's EPBS has worked together with several European authorities to raise the profile of this profession at the European level. One of those authorities is the ESCO, where we have defined three levels of the Profession. The entrance level Biomedical Scientist (European Qualification framework Level (EQF) 6), with a university degree; Biomedical Scientist Specialist (EQF 7) with a master's degree; and finally Biomedical Scientist Advanced (EQF 8) with a PhD degree.

In November 2005 and again in 2015, the EPBS wrote to the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health, exposing our concerns regarding the level of education of the Spanish Biomedical Scientists.



We note that they do not have the same level of education as most of their European colleagues. In 2009, we wrote again sharing the same concerns. Now, 20 years after our first letter, we are writing to support the petition of our colleagues in Spain to have a professional qualification that allows them to work as their colleagues in Europe and can also progress to postgraduate studies. The benefits are for the health system and patients.

Many countries in Europe have already achieved this standard, specifically Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom United. This standard is also accepted in the United States of America, Australia, Canada, and Japan.

It wouldn't be in the best interest of the profession or for our Spanish colleagues if they couldn't reach the standards. Currently, it is not the intention of EPBS to have a structure of two professional levels in Europe. However, if the harmonization of educational standards cannot be achieved at an adequate level, this will undoubtedly be an inevitable result. The impact on the profession in Spain includes difficulties in accessing job opportunities in other European Union countries and an entry barrier to postgraduate studies.

We are aware that in the last few months, the Spanish Associations of Biomedical Scientists have come together to create a platform, working together with one voice, to change (so necessary) in the training of biomedical scientists in Spain. All over Europe, there were echoes of the demonstrations that took place, first in front of several hospitals and finally in Madrid, on the 5th of March.

All EPBS members support and understand the need to have an education in Biomedical Sciences at the university level, for the best interests of patients and national health systems. Therefore, as has happened in other European countries, integration at the higher education level should be the only option, it will promote ERASMUS (Students, Teachers and Personal) mobility, increasing employment and enhancing the European labour market, contributing a stronger and more powerful Europe.



In addition to changing the educational level, the Spanish authorities are blocking Spanish Biomedical Scientists from accessing the ERASMUS program and integration into the European labour market.

We hope that you recognize the seriousness of this problem for our Spanish colleagues and understand that this problem has been ongoing for them for a considerable time. Now is the time to act and make the change happen.

I trust that you will seriously consider the position of the EPBS and will act accordingly. I am available to meet and share relevant data that support the need for change in Spain with us if you wish to do so.

Fernando Mendes, PhD

EPBS President