24 June 2024

To Whom It May Concern

The professional associations of osteopathy across Europe and beyond have come together as Osteopathy Europe (OE). The OE represents 22 professional European osteopathic associations and supports the regulation, recognition, and integration of osteopathy as primary healthcare providers within health services and patient care. We are committed to promoting the harmonisation of standards for the osteopathic profession, supporting research initiatives, and advocating for high levels of education within osteopathy. The OE represents over 28.000 osteopaths and is a member of the global body, the Osteopathic International Alliance (OIA), which has been in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) since 2018.

Osteopaths are first-contact, independent healthcare practitioners and should not be considered as a subset of physiotherapy, as osteopaths practice not just with a toolkit of techniques but with a philosophy and set of principles which are coherent and developed over the course of time [1, 2].

Research shows highly positive osteopathic patient-reported outcomes [3], osteopathic care is considered to be safe [4] and “was found to be a ‘dominant’ (low back pain) and cost-effective strategy (neck pain) compared to usual care” [5]. The majority of osteopathic treatment is centred on the musculoskeletal system [4]; we know that this is a leading cause of disability globally [6], and as the global population continues to increase and age, the demand for health care in this sector will continue to grow.

The research shows that osteopaths are well placed to deliver beneficial, safe treatment and, by doing so, can increase the national health service provision and available patient choice.

Osteopathy is currently regulated in 12 European countries: Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The profession is also recognised as an independent primary healthcare profession in Italy, working towards full regulation [7].

The OE, through its predecessor organisations EFO and FORE, developed the Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), European Standard on Osteopathic Healthcare Provision (EN 16686) in 2015 [7]. This standard has close links to the WHO Benchmarks of Osteopathic Training published in 2010 [2]. This CEN standard was published in 33 European countries and has proven to be a helpful benchmark standard for European governments, which subsequently brought osteopathy into statutory regulation[7].

The OE advocate adopting education standards consistent with this CEN standard as part of statutory regulation of osteopathy to ensure that the equivalent level of patient safety and patient care is available to citizens throughout Europe. Regulation of osteopathy in all European countries will improve patient safety and promote the exchange of knowledge and labour in line with the EU/EEA Professional Qualifications Directive.

**Svenska Osteopatförbundet** are full members of Osteopathy Europe and are well respected and engaged members. We can support the Swedish health authorities with relevant information at any stage.

On behalf of the OE

Board



Hanna Tómasdóttir

President

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