



Activity Report

European Federation of Nurses' Associations
Working Year 2021



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Abbreviations

▪ AI	Artificial Intelligence
▪ AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
▪ APN	Advanced Practice Nurse
▪ CPD	Continuous Professional Development
▪ CPME	Standing Committee of European Doctors
▪ DG	Directorate General
▪ DG CONNECT	European Commission Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
▪ DG REFORM	European Commission Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support
▪ DG SANTE	European Commission Directorate General for Health and Food Safety
▪ DIR36/55	Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC & 2013/55/EU)
▪ ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
▪ EFN	European Federation of Nurses' Associations
▪ EHR	Electronic Health Records
▪ ENRF	European Nursing Research Foundation
▪ EPP	European People's Party Group of the European Parliament
▪ EU	European Union
▪ H2020	Horizon 2020 programme (EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation)
▪ IMMUNION	Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION (EU project)
▪ InteropEHRRate (IEHR)	Interoperable EHRs at user edge (H2020 project)
▪ MEP(s)	Member(s) of the European Parliament
▪ OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
▪ OSHA / EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
▪ PGEU	Pharmaceutical Group of European Union
▪ QualMent	Quality Mentorship for Developing Competent Nursing Students
▪ Smart4Health (S4H)	Citizen-Centred EU-EHR Exchange for Personalised Health (H2020 project)
▪ SOLP	EFN Strategic & Operational Lobby Plan
▪ WHO	World Health Organization
▪ WG	Working group
▪ WP	Work Package

Executive Summary

2021 has undoubtedly been another year marked by unprecedented challenges with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The past year has highlighted the vital contribution that the nursing profession makes to society and individual patients and their families. Nurses from across all disciplines play a critical role in providing quality, safe and lifesaving health services.

Nurses have always been at the forefront to ensure patients receive the appropriate health care for optimal physical and mental well-being, while creating [innovative solutions](#) in response to [new challenges](#) such as those that have emerged due to COVID-19; nurses have proven to be true agents of change. However, the pandemic has also revealed how nurses are often underestimated and taken for granted. One of the lessons learnt from the pandemic, is the need to act quickly and nurses have demonstrated that they are in the best possible position to proactively respond to any emergency. Therefore, investing in the education of nurses is an invaluable investment in the health and economic prosperity of all European citizens. Education and empowering nurses in [safe working environments](#), recognising their unique and vital contribution to healthcare delivery, supporting nurses and creating greater leadership opportunities are all essential actions that are necessary to ensure the creation of a strong, responsive and resilient healthcare system.

A significant and proud moment for EFN in 2021, was the recognition by the EU Institutions of all nurses' efforts to fight the pandemic and care for those in need in unprecedented times with [a special recognition European Citizen's Prize](#) awarded in November 2021. Another key achievement in 2021, was the participation of EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, in the **G20 Global Health Summit** as [keynote speaker](#), and the opportunity to mark the significant contribution of nurses to the health and well-being of society and to reflect on their vital daily work. The COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed the longstanding position of EFN underpinned by robust research that demonstrates the importance of qualified and competent nursing personnel for better patient outcomes. Therefore, it remains crucial to apply the [EU Directive 2013/55/EU](#), and to ensure that the EU Member States invest in nursing and strategies for recruitment and retention which is a vital pillar to ensuring the building of a healthier, safer, fairer, resilient, and more sustainable health systems.

This year was also marked by the EFN participation in the “**Future of Europe**” discussions which is recognised as an unprecedented pan-European and multilingual democratic exercise. This was a unique and timely opportunity for European citizens, including the voices of nurses and women, to debate Europe's challenges and inform the priorities and strategic direction for the future while ensuring that the European Union that is fit-for-practice. EFN was invited to provide nurses' views to several key meetings including the **European Parliament EPP Group meeting, with Chancellor Angela Merkel**, in April 2021; and the **Conference on the Future of Europe - European Citizens' Panels**, in July, October, and November 2021. The main key message highlighted at these events included that it is time to adopt a 'health in all policies' approach and strengthen health systems globally and the nursing workforce to create safe, resilient, sustainable, and healthy communities.

2021 also showed that more than ever communication is essential to influencing and disseminating the message to key leaders and relevant institutions and organisations on behalf of nurses and patients. The **EFN launched several campaigns on its social media channels** (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) on some key topics such as Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), COVID-19, mentorship, World Mental Health Day, Conference on the Future of Europe, as examples. Altogether, the **EFN posts were viewed by more than half million people** demonstrating that EFN is effective at disseminating information to people at key moments in time. The European Commission also uses the EFN communication network to promote and highlight important messages across Europe. One example is the **Coalition for Vaccination social media campaigns**, of which the EFN is one of the co-chairs, committed to disseminating accurate and factual information on vaccination. In 2021, **two campaigns** (April & October) incorporating the European Immunization Week and the Flu Awareness Week were promoted through EFN, CPME, and PGEU social media channels. The [EFN social media posts](#) alone achieved **115.000 views**. Delivering the right message, at the right time, from the right messenger, through the right medium, can save lives!

Even with the challenging and changing global environment and the ongoing pandemic, the EFN continued in 2021 to relentlessly lobby the EU Institutions and key EU stakeholders on behalf of members to ensure every opportunity was embraced to reflect nurses' voices to shape EU developments in line with the [EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#) the endorsed strategic plan which is underpinned by the principles enshrined in the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) to inform fit-for-purpose EU

policies, **including education, workforce and quality and safety** – with digitalisation as a cross cutting item to achieve better outcomes for health and the nursing profession., In addition the EFN strategic plan also embraces the European Pillar of Social Rights commitment to better access to healthcare for all EU citizens/people, in parallel with creating better working conditions for the 3 million nurses throughout the EU; and providing politicians and policy makers the nurses' views and expertise to respond to this pandemic, and contribute to the planning to be prepared for any other future health crisis, highlighting the inequality of access to care, equipment, including vaccines, and other infrastructure challenges such as the stark digital divide between countries and within countries, and the fragmentation across ecosystems.

In this context, the EFN followed closely topics that are crucial for the nurses and the nursing profession as **COVID-19** ongoing pandemic, providing nurses' perspectives and expertise for concrete actions to support and protect nurses on the frontline. In addition to the meetings the EFN attended, it also published some **articles** on topics including: "[The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nurses in Europe](#)", [COVID-19 crisis management at national level](#), [COVID-19 impact on nurses' health and wellbeing – Biological Agent Directive 2020-739](#), and undertook a [social media campaign](#) that **reached almost 80.000 people in one week**. The EFN also continued to examine and highlight **mental health** in the context of the pandemic – as nurses' mental health was severely impacted by COVID-19. The EFN attended key meetings, in addition to launching a [joint statement](#) together with Mental Health Europe, on the occasion of [World Mental Health Day 2021](#), calling for a series of measures to alleviate the frontline nurses from unnecessary stress and mental suffering. The EFN also undertook a [EFN social media campaign](#) in October 2021, highlighting the need to ensure the well-being and mental health of nurses to build a strong and resilient healthcare eco-system, which posts were **viewed by 15.000** people.

One of the top ten global public health challenges of our time, and a key concern for the nurses and the nursing profession is **Antimicrobial Resistance** which was closely monitored by the EFN to embrace opportunities to contribute to 'fit for purpose' policies with nurses' voices informing the national AMR Action Plans. In addition to participating in some key meetings, the EFN also took part in the [European Antibiotic Awareness Day](#) held on 18 November, through its [social media channels](#) raising awareness on this key policy topic. **EFN posts reached almost 7.000 views**.

For decades EFN has been committed to promoting and championing education and is one of the key EFN SOLP priorities within the strategic plan. The EFN continued to monitor I developments in relation to the [EU directive 2013/55/EU](#) implementation, and the revised Annex V of the Directive. The EFN also continued to follow up on the ongoing debate on **mentorship**, by attending some key EU meetings and continuing to develop the Erasmus+ EU project [QualMent](#) with EFN is a partner. The QualMent project has now come to an end, with some very concrete and positive deliverables in line with Directive 2013/55/EU and Article 31. These include: [Guideline on clinical nurse mentors' mentoring competence development](#) aiming to help implementing quality mentoring; [Advanced Mentorship Competences \(Modules I-III\)](#) as teaching material; and a [Course of Advanced Mentorship Competences for clinical mentors](#), aiming to empower clinical mentors with high-quality skills and competences needed to perform their role.

Another key topic is **Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)** due to the increasing and changing health needs of the patients and citizens in Europe that require nursing to take leadership on advanced practice roles to support safe and effective health service delivery. In 2021, the EFN collected and collated data from its 36 National Nurses Associations on the current Advanced Practice Nursing frameworks in the EU, with a view to mapping the existing developments and understanding the development and value added by the role across Europe. The findings are being analysed and will be compiled as a meta-analysis available in 2022, with the aim to update and consolidate the EFN Members' work on APN and inform EFN Policy Statement on APN, which will be available in 2022 to be used by the EFN and its members in our daily lobby work.

In terms of **workforce** which continues to be high on EFN political agenda, the EFN has been lobbying the EU institutions on the importance and value of having a **resilient nursing workforce**, and on the central role they must play in this in order to be better prepared for any next health crisis. With the ongoing pandemic, we have already lost 30% of our EU nursing workforce. Therefore, it is essential to build a resilient nursing workforce through the [National Recovery and Resilience Plans](#) and monitor the allocation of these EU funds that each European country is receiving. The €672,5-billion-euro fund needs to be used to build a resilient nursing workforce. To reinforce its position on this, the EFN is developing an EFN Policy Statement on "Sustaining a Resilient EU Nursing Workforce", that will be considered for approval at the April 2022 EFN General Assembly. Another important topic that has been a key concern for the EFN and its members is **violence against nurses/women**. 92% of the nursing workforce is constituted by women. As women, nurses are more likely to be exposed to verbal, emotional or physical violence (including death threats, punches, and sexual harassment) at their workplace in comparison with other professions. As this is such a serious issue, the EFN has been lobbying the EU institutions to ensure

that nurses/women have a strong voice in the design of health and social policies, with the understanding that they are ideally positioned to both lead and support such developments. In this context, the EFN [collected data](#) from its National Nurses Associations on possible gender or profession-based violence and/or discrimination that nurses may be experiencing at the national level, which shows that violent incidents are increasing (even more with the impact of COVID-19), and although this is something they are forced to accept as part of their job, it is totally unacceptable in the 21st century. As undertaken in previous years the EFN proactively engaged with the [International Day for Elimination of Violence against women](#) online campaign held on 25 November, through its social media network, raising some key messages.

In contributing to **patient safety and quality of care**, the EFN continued to be very active on the topic of **vaccination** - through the [Coalition for Vaccination](#). The Coalition for Vaccination brings together European associations of healthcare workers as well as relevant students' associations in the field - who organised, several meetings at EU level, such as the Health Policy Platform webinar on 9 November, to understand the low uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in some EU Member States, and delivered on two successful **online campaigns** (EFN social media with **115.000 views** and **2.500 interactions**). In addition, the Coalition for vaccination also launched a [manifesto](#) calling on healthcare professionals to get vaccinated against COVID-19, and a [Flu Statement-Manifesto](#) recommending the flu vaccine as the best way for people to protect themselves and those around them. In the context of its lobby work on this topic, the EFN also published an [EFN Policy Statement on "Nursing Workforce Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19"](#) raising the importance of vaccination of healthcare professionals and its impact on the resilience of healthcare systems in the EU. Furthermore, the EFN is also a partner of the EU project 'Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION' (**IMMUNION**), bringing in the nurses' voices and expertise on the issue. The project aims, through its development and deliverables, to add value to the existing EU and national initiatives, reinforcing the Coalition for Vaccination, and by increasing stakeholders' collaboration to address the main issue of access to accurate information on vaccination.

In terms of **Digitalisation**, the EFN continued in 2021 to follow this topic very closely by participating in some key EU events, as the eHealth Stakeholder Group Webinar on Health Data Space, held in February, in which the EFN together with HOPE, presented a [Policy Paper on Interoperability](#) within the WG1 work, developed at the request of the European Commission; and by being involved in two EU projects on European Electronic Health Records - [Smart4Health](#) & [InteropEHRate](#), representing 3 million nurses/end-users, and providing nurses' input to the several deliverables being developed, next to disseminating it among the EU health stakeholders and the EU Institutions the EFN is in close contact with. The EFN also published two articles: [Leveraging the trust of nurses to advance a digital agenda in Europe: a critical review of health policy literature](#) & [Digital transformation of healthcare for the patient](#), stressing the key role that the nursing workforce can play in the deployment of the EU EHR and AI technologies in healthcare settings.

In line with the EFN [Policy Statement](#) on nurse's contribution to tackle climate change, adopted in the EFN GA 2019 in Brussels, the EFN is following up the topic on **Planetary Health**, focussing on the broader perspectives of nurses' engagement in the political EU developments on climate and environmental change, mostly contained in the [European Green Deal](#). Planetary health education for nurses means a shift from traditional medical healthcare-oriented education to a 'whole aspects of prevention' approach. Despite some efforts at the European level, the EFN considers that ambitious actions remain necessary in education and health policies to offer a consistent health promotion education to nurses from which a planetary health role could build on. As such, next to participating in some key meetings, the EFN also provided its input to the [public consultation on education for environmental sustainability](#), in July 2021, and collected some data from its members on the ongoing actions at national level on planetary health. This data, that is crucial for the EFN lobby work on this topic, is being compiled and will be available soon.

Raising awareness of nurses' invaluable expertise, their lifesaving contribution to health, wellness and prosperity of Europe and beyond while highlighting the daily challenges and reality of delivering safe and effective care by the EFN at EU political level, is leading to concrete positive impact at all levels. EU policymakers are taking nurses' voice and views more seriously which is reflected with the integration into EU policy development. It is evident that the EFN lobby work driven in the last number of years is making a real difference. It is therefore essential that in the years ahead that at national and EU level, policymakers continue to value nurses' voices and expertise to inform and enhance policy. We are now at a key political moment, with the future in our hands to build on the achievements of 2021 and continue in partnership with EU Institutions and national policy leaders to contribute to shaping healthier, safer, fairer, resilient, and more sustainable health systems across Europe.

Foreword

Dear EFN Members,
Dear Colleagues

On behalf of the EFN, we would like to begin by paying tribute to all our National Nursing Associations and their nurse members who continue to provide compassionate, competent, courageous care to our communities during the global pandemic with remarkable courage and professionalism. It is with enormous pride that the EFN Executive Committee, the EFN General Assembly and the EFN team has the privilege and pleasure to serve, represent and deliver for nurses who are critical in providing quality, safe and lifesaving health services for all patients and citizens of Europe.



Since the first cases of COVID-19 identified two years ago in many countries, COVID-19 continues to be an ongoing challenge for nurses and the nursing profession who are committed to caring for millions of citizens. It has been unprecedented situation with many experiencing the sad loss of family, friends and colleagues or exposed themselves or enduring serious illness as a result from caring for others. Our members, across Europe, have been on the frontline putting their lives at risk and facing relentless workloads with significant impact on their physical and mental health wellbeing. Despite an obvious lack of resources and funds across many EU countries, our nurses are doing their absolute best to deliver optimal healthcare to maximise patient's health outcomes and recovery processes with exceptional professionalism, commitment, expertise, and innovation, even though they have witnessed the devastating suffering of individuals and their families with an enormous impact on their own mental and physical health.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the added value of the nursing workforce to the European healthcare ecosystems – working at the frontline of care, providing the evidence that nurses' competencies are central to the functioning of healthcare systems in the EU. To honour the tremendous work that nurses have delivered to fight the pandemic and care for those in need, the European Citizen's Prize 2021 provided a special recognition to all the EU nurses for their instrumental role, relentless and exceptional commitment to working on the frontline during the COVID-19 crisis providing care 24/7 at the bedside of patients, in the most difficult and unprecedented circumstances, risking their own lives and that of their loved ones. It was with great honour on the 9 November at the European Parliament that the EFN, as European nurses' umbrella organisation, received the special recognition of the European Citizen's Prize on behalf of all the European nurses for their heroic efforts to fight the pandemic.

It is evident that COVID-19 is an ongoing reality with a resurgence of numbers in many countries and the possibility of new variants that may bring new unanticipated challenges. Over the year, EFN Members have highlighted many lessons learnt from the pandemic. These lessons and reflections provided the evidence for EFN to continue to lobby the EU Institutions during 2021. In particular, EFN embraced every opportunity to work with the European Commission, to ensure that all the political decisions are future proofed and resilience to meet the requirements of the healthcare system and our profession. The lessons learnt from the frontline provide fit-for-practice solutions that are being implemented and upscaled throughout the EU with the support of the EU.

From the European Commission perspective, it is acknowledged that a stronger Europe-wide coordination is required in relation to health, with more investment to build the foundations for a more resilient health system and better preparation for possible future health crises. The EFN is proactively contributing to the European Union being more responsive and better prepared for any health emergency. A priority is to stabilise health care systems and enhance quality and safety of care by investing in recruitment and retention of nurses with appropriate remuneration and improved working conditions. The shortage of nurses is a deteriorating crisis with an estimate 30% of our already reduced nursing workforce leaving the profession due to the enormous burden and difficult working conditions that have been neglected for years. The EFN has

lobbied for EU leadership to address the critical shortage of nurses and invest in building robust and resilience healthcare systems.

In 2022, the EFN will continue to ensure every opportunity is taken to ensure nurses' voices are represented and heard at EU level. The EFN, in partnership with all our NNA members, is committed and determined that EFN EU policy agenda which includes education, workforce, quality and safety, remain priorities on national and EU political agendas. Challenges for the healthcare systems all over Europe cannot be underestimated. We truly hope that this New Year and the many lessons learnt will bring significant change and an optimistic future.

We really hope you will enjoy reading this EFN Activity Report, that provides an overview of the daily lobby efforts of EFN in 2021, in a very difficult period for all. These achievements would not be possible without your commitment, expertise, collective insights, engagement and positive support which we genuinely value and appreciate.

Looking forward to continuing our collaboration on behalf of all nurses in 2022.



Prof Dr Elizabeth Adams
EFN President



Prof Dr Paul De Raève
EFN Secretary General

SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO THE NURSES AT THE 2021 EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZEN'S PRIZE

"Many Europeans, mostly in the health sector, undertook heroic efforts to fight the pandemic and help those in need. To acknowledge these heroic efforts, the Chancellery decided to add a theme to the submitted projects, namely "the fight against the Coronavirus", European Parliament Vice-President Dita Charanzová, Chancellor of the European Citizen's Prize.

On 9 November 2021, the EFN was invited to [receive](#) the European Citizen Prize 2021, on behalf of all the European nurses for their instrumental role, relentless and exceptional commitment to working on the frontline during the COVID-19 crisis providing care 24/7 at the bedside of patients, in the most difficult and unprecedented circumstances, risking their own lives and that of their loved ones.

The [European Citizen's Prize](#) recognises every year initiatives that contribute to European cooperation and the promotion of common values, namely to projects that promote better mutual understanding and closer integration between citizens of the Member States or facilitate cross-border or transnational cooperation within the European Union; involve long-term, cross-border or transnational cultural cooperation contributing to the strengthening of a European spirit; give concrete expression to the values enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.



This year, and in the context of the ongoing Covid-19, knowing that many Europeans, mostly in the health sector, have been fighting day and night to contain the pandemic and help those in need, the Chancellery of this prize decided to acknowledge these heroic efforts, and to add a theme to the submitted projects, namely "the fight against the Coronavirus". However, as it was not possible to award the European Citizen's Prize to all the EU nurses (and doctors) who worked tirelessly during the pandemic, the Chancellery decided to honour all of them, by offering a special recognition to their European umbrella organisations, on behalf of all the nurses all over Europe.

It was with great honour that the EFN was present at the event organised at the European Parliament to receive this recognition on behalf of all the European nurses daily at the bedside of patient in these very difficult times. Paul expressed that *"When you look at healthcare resilience from a nursing perspective, we need your leadership to build that resilience and especially when tackling the shortage of nurses at an EU level, right now! We need to look for concrete, fit-for-practice solutions, implement them and upscale them throughout the EU with the technical support from the European Commission."*



In her recognition speech, the European Parliament Vice-President and Chancellor of the European Citizen's Prize, Dita Charanzová, expressed that *"during the pandemic many Europeans, mainly in the health sector, undertook heroic efforts to fight the pandemic and help those in need. While many of us were kept at home, our doctors and nurses were sent to the frontline. The European Parliament wants to thank the healthcare community for getting us through this crisis and for saving so many lives. As it was not possible to provide*

an award to every single European nurse individually, it was decided to honour all of them and to thank them for all the work done, by offering a special recognition to their European umbrella organisation on their behalf.”

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the added value of the nursing workforce to the European healthcare ecosystems – working at the frontline of care, providing the evidence that nurses’ competencies are central to the functioning of healthcare systems in the EU. But the challenge of resilience building cannot be discussed without concrete, fit-for-practice solutions, being implemented and upscaled throughout the EU with the support of the EU.



I. EFN KEY LOBBY PRIORITIES

The EFN continues to dive and inform European policy development and implementation informed and within the framework of the [EFN Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan 2021-2027](#) (EFN SOLP) that is strategically aligned to a number of important European policies and process including, for example, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (EPSR) Principles (namely principles 1 'Education'; 6 'Wages'; 16 'Healthcare'; and 18 'Long-Term Care'); – the monitoring of the [European Semester](#), in particular the [Country Specific Recommendations](#), through which the European Commission aims to support the EU Member States to achieve their commitments. The EFN in 2021 built on the achievements of previous years and focused on the three major key policy areas: [Education](#) (under the lead of EFN Professional Committee), [EU Workforce for Health](#) (under the lead of EFN Workforce Committee), and [Patient Safety and Quality of Care](#) including [digital health](#) (under the lead of EFN Public Policy Committee).

One of the key achievements for the EFN in 2021 was the EFN participation in the [Global Health Summit \(G20\)](#), where EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, had the opportunity to highlight the significant [contribution of nurses](#) to the health wellbeing, and prosperity of society and to reflect on their expertise, competent and remarkable compassion and care delivered on a daily basis that is invaluable to all. The global leaders were informed that “investing in nursing is a certain investment in the health of G20 nations and people around the planet”. *For more information on this event, see page 21.*



1. EDUCATION

↳ Directive 2013/55/EU, Annexe V

The Directive has remained a central component of the EFN policy agenda. The EFN continued to follow-up on the latest developments in relation to the education of nurses, in particular the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), including the development of Annexe V of the Directive regarding the minimum educational standards for nurses. A major achievement for the nurses and the nursing profession, in 2021, is the publication of this [Annexe V of the Directive](#) on mutual recognition of professional qualifications, taking into account EFN members' expertise. This Annexe introduces changes to the scientific category areas (as person-centred care theories, management theories applied to nursing, and evidence-based practice), and to the technical progress category (as e-health and healthcare/nursing methods) and lists the evidence of formal qualifications and titles of training courses eligible for automatic recognition under the Directive. This is important for the curriculum for nursing within each member state and will be particularly important in the post COVID environment, and the enormous shortage of nurses due to the pandemic and underinvestment in nursing over many years. Therefore, the [EFN Matrix 3+1](#) is a very important policy document that complements the Directive and Annexe V.

↳ Mentorship

Building a resilient EU Nursing workforce includes strengthening frontline mentorship, leading to fit-for-practice nurses, that complies with EU legislation, Directive 2013/55/EU. Therefore, high quality clinical education is paramount to the development of a competent workforce of nurses able to deliver safe patient care. Mentorship during a nursing students' clinical training and the support given to clinical mentors, is often taking due to it being an additional role that is added to the nursing care responsibilities and patient care is always the primary priority.. To address this important issue EFN had been participating in the EU project, under Erasmus+, called 'Quality mentorship for developing competent nursing students' ([QualMent](#)), proving frontline nurse end-user input and making sure that the final clinical mentor's model is fit-for-purpose. The project objective was to address the clinical mentor's lack in nursing education and develop the clinical mentor's competence with mentor education for national and international nursing students. This project is important as it links to the Directive 2013/55/EU and Article 31 (8 competencies) and developed clinical mentors' competence models which provides new knowledge and findings regarding the current situation of clinical mentoring in nursing study programmes in the EU. In 2021 this project came to an end and its [deliverables](#) are available on several

languages to support and standardise clinical mentorship for nursing students through the clinical placements of its study programmes across the EU. *For more information on the project, see page 30.*

As quality mentorship has a significant impact on the future nursing student's careers, in addition to the European project the EFN Members discussed and approved at the EFN General Assembly, April 2021, a new [EFN Policy Statement on Nurses Mentorship](#) to ensure that those future nurses will be supported and provided with the best education to deliver good quality care. It is recognised that EU clinical mentor models for nursing students used across Europe must be aligned with the 8 nursing competencies as set out in the EU Directive 2013/55/EU. For the EFN members, this provides the framework and the opportunity to enhance student nurse education across Europe by developing and supporting nurse mentors.

➔ **Advanced Practice Nurse**

The nursing profession has evolved with the advancements in technology, evidence-based research and new care options. To meet this demand nurses have advanced their education and practice to deliver innovation and lead change. Interprofessional care is becoming more important with a strong focus on professional collaboration, which opens opportunities for nurses to advance and contribute their expert knowledge and practice to improve safe and effective care. It is important for nurses to achieve higher levels of education and training to support the development of new and advanced nursing roles with greater professional autonomy. It is evident that the role of nurses is advancing rapidly that needs to be guided within a framework to evolve the new scope of advanced practice based on evidence and lessons learnt from similar contexts. Advanced nursing roles will positively contribute to the ambition of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

The EFN has been committed to ensuring the nursing profession evolves effectively in response to patient needs and care demands. Examples of this include the [EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1](#), and the EFN Working Group on Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), created in 2018 that is dedicated to advance practice developments. Evidence-based data on this issue and an EFN Policy position is essential for members to advance developments at national level in addition to guide the EFN representative to lobby the EU institutions. In 2021, the EFN Working Group collected data from EFN members, which is now being analysed and will soon be published as a meta-analysis. The research identified a significant level of variation in how those countries that reported having an APN framework define what an APN means and how it is regulated at education and practice level. The Working Group is further investigating the design of models of APN that work in different contexts and the potential impact of a standardised regulatory framework on current qualified advance practice nurses across Europe. *For more information on this data collection, see page 48.*

In addition to this work, the EFN is in the process of developing an EFN Policy Statement on Advanced Practice Nurse, which should be discussed/approved by the April 2022 EFN General Assembly.

The EFN will continue working on these education key points in 2022.

2. **EU WORKFORCE FOR HEALTH**

➔ **Violence and harassment against nurses**

The issues related to violence against nurses has been a key concern for the EFN members for many years, and during the pandemic reports of violence has increased. Nurses at the frontline are more exposed to verbal, emotional or physical (including sexual) violence at their workplace in comparison to other professions. In 2021, several EFN Members have reached out to the EFN Office asking for support in looking for applying for EU-funds to support projects particularly related to this topic. The

issue of violence falls within the responsibility of the European Commission's DG Justice, who is responsible for the political actions related to "gender violence". However, other DGs, like DG Sante and DG Employment, plan a central role to protect the nursing workforce from work related violence, arguing that awareness-raising is key



to spreading the clear message of zero tolerance of all forms of violence against women and girls (92% of the nursing workforce).

In order to contribute nurses' voice to the EU policy debate, the EFN [collected data](#) from its 36 members on gender or profession-based violence and/or discrimination that nurses may be experiencing at the national level. The main findings show that violence against nurses has been shown across different continents to lead to inevitable and unpredictable trauma on nurses' career, with many nurses experiencing significant and lasting psychological trauma. Not only do nurses believe that violent incidents are increasing, but also that violence is something they are forced to accept as part of their job. Violent incidents unintentionally lead to lower quality of patient care and increase in nurses' intention to leave the profession, which in turn can lead to further organisational inefficiencies and negative experiences for patients, triggering further incidents as part of an endless cycle of violence. To take this debate to the next step and to have the nurses' voice heard at EU level, the EFN also developed a [Position Statement on Violence and Harassment Against Nurses](#), which was discussed and approved by the EFN General Assembly, in April 2021, calling for immediate EU/national governments action. Violence and harassment against nurses is not new, however, it is totally unacceptable. The EU Member States must take this seriously and take concrete actions to eliminate inappropriate and intolerable behaviour. Nurses need to be protected from any kinds of gender related violence and discrimination. Finally, as in previous years, the EFN proactively engaged in the online campaign on 25 November – the [International Day for Elimination of Violence against women](#) – raising some key messages on its social media and the EFN Website. The frequency and impact of violence on nurses/women is accumulating and became more prevalent during the pandemic with report of violence being perpetrated by patients and visitors with evidence that this worsens in disaster and conflict situations. This needs to stop!

➔ **Building a Resilient Nursing Workforce**

COVID-19 not only reinforced the need to build a resilient nursing workforce to protect Europeans - all the Member States are in need of more frontline nurses. A significant high number of nurses have left the profession in the last 2 years, since the beginning of the pandemic that also highlighted that our healthcare ecosystems, thought to be among the strongest in the world, are very fragile. The ongoing pandemic also demonstrated that our European society is not resilient enough and that the healthcare and public health systems need to become the cornerstone of resilience ([Pact for Skills](#)). The EU should invest now in a 'health in all policies' approach and should not reduce health as being only a matter of healthcare but important to the whole functioning of society.

The [State of the World's nursing 2020 report](#) is calling for the education and recruitment of 6 million more nurses. *'Nurses are the backbone of any health system'* as recently stated Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General. Even if the European Union presents better level of nursing personnel per inhabitants, the report shows that *'many wealthy countries are not producing enough nurses to meet their own healthcare needs, and are therefore reliant on migration, exacerbating shortages in poorer countries'*, which is evident in several European countries. It is therefore essential that the EU educates more nurses to cover its own domestic needs and promotes other countries in the world to do the same.

With the establishment of the new European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority ([HERA](#)) and/or the development of a health and wellbeing plan, the EU must consider the introduction of legally binding standards of number of healthcare professionals per habitants or patients and according to the relevant European policy mechanisms such as the European Council and Parliament. Therefore, we have now an unprecedented window of opportunity to address these issues by calling on the European Institutions for an ambitious investment in Building a Resilient Nursing Workforce. As such, the EFN is now in the process of developing an EFN Policy Statement on "Sustaining a Resilient EU Nursing Workforce", which was discussed at the EFN General Assembly in October 2021 and is to be approved at the April 2022 EFN General Assembly, calling on the European Institutions for an ambitious investment in Building a Resilient Nursing Workforce in the coming years. Having enough, highly educated and motivated nurses will support the EU efforts to act on all health determinants (social, economic and ecological) through health promotion and prevention. The EU needs new laws, policies and investments to develop and deliver resilience across all health services in Europe.

The EFN will continue following up on these workforce challenges in 2022.

3. PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY OF CARE

↳ Vaccination

Vaccination features high on the agenda of both the European Institutions and individual countries and healthcare authorities. As the largest professional group of the healthcare professions, nurses are the frontline staff largely responsible for delivering safe and effective vaccination programmes to communities across Europe, yet rarely receiving formal recognition for this life-saving endeavour. Also, nurses have the additional role of educating the public, identifying vulnerable groups, raising awareness, and promoting uptake. The EFN Members [best practices](#) have shown the important and effective work of nurses in relation to vaccination. As such, and in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the In February 2021 EFN published the [EFN Policy Statement: "Nursing Workforce Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19"](#) raising the importance of vaccination of healthcare professionals and its impact on the resilience of healthcare systems in the EU.

Vaccination is the main tool for primary prevention of diseases and one of the most cost-effective public health measures available. Currently vaccination prevents between 2 and 3 million deaths in the world every year, and that immunisation through vaccination is the best defence we have against serious, preventable, and sometimes deadly, contagious diseases. The [European Commission is reinforcing](#) its support to national vaccination efforts to increase coverage through the "[Coalition for Vaccination](#)", that brings together European associations of healthcare professionals and students associations in the field, of which the [EFN](#) President Elizabeth Adams is one of the co-chairs, with our colleagues from [CPME](#) (Doctors) and [PGEU](#) (Pharmacists). The Coalition aims to deliver accurate information to the public, combating myths around vaccines and vaccination, and to exchange best practices on vaccination, to build vaccine trust and thereby help increase vaccine uptake. In April 2021, the Coalition for Vaccination launched a [manifesto](#) calling on healthcare professionals to get vaccinated against COVID-19, following-up on the 2020 advocacy campaign to promote the uptake of vaccines among health professionals and their patients. In October 2021, the Coalition for Vaccination members agreed on a [Flu Statement-Manifesto](#) to recommend the flu vaccine as the best way for people to protect themselves and those around them, being aware that this year Flu Vaccine was more important than ever. Both documents were launched in the context of the 2021 awareness campaigns, launched across Europe simultaneously with the European Immunization Week and the Flu Awareness Week on EFN, CPME, PGEU social media channels (@EFNBrussels - Facebook, twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn) promoting vaccination (key words: #EUFluDay #VaccinesWork #vaccinesworkforall #CoalitionForVaccination #ImmunizeEurope). **EFN posts reached more than 115.000 people and 2.500 interacted with EFN.**



The EFN also participated in all the regular **meetings of the Coalition for Vaccination**, held internally (between the 3 co-chairs), as well as with other members of the Coalition and the European Commission (on 11 March, and on 12 October 2021), where key points were discussed, including: the coalition work; the vaccination media campaigns; the coalition governance and membership; the members' activities on vaccination; future commitments of the Coalition; EU project proposal; etc. The students (ENSA - nurses, EMSA - doctors, EPSA - pharmacists) are also very much involved in the Coalition for Vaccination, bringing their views to the debate. The three co-chairs also met with DG Sante Director General, Sandra Gallina, in January 2021, to discuss COVID-19 vaccination strategy and the cooperation of the Coalition for Vaccination to spread the information in the deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine.



The EFN also participated in other meetings in relation to vaccination including:

- **Webinar for health professionals on COVID-19 vaccination**, on 10 February 2021, hosted by the EU Health Policy Platform, where health professionals' questions about COVID-19 vaccines were discussed. It highlighted that health professionals play an important role in the roll out of vaccines. People trust and seek advice from health professionals when taking decisions about vaccination, and health professionals serve as role models when getting vaccinated themselves. It is therefore important that health professionals have all the information they need to feel confident about COVID-19 vaccines, for their patients and themselves.
- **eHealth Stakeholder Group meeting**, on 5 May 2021, where participants discussed on Covid-19 and lessons learned, including vaccination, and health data space.
- **Routine vaccinations in time of Covid-19 across Europe**, on 20 July 2021, organised by Active Citizenship Network (ACN), as part of the EU webinar cycle 'Health at the heart of Europe Future'. The meeting focussed on routine vaccination in pandemic time and how the Covid-19 vaccines left behind the other ones.
- **Roundtable on Influenza Vaccination**, on 21 September 2021, organised by the European Parliament. The event gathered key stakeholders, who shared their expertise to feed into the development of policy recommendations on how to improve vaccine supply, forecasting and access mechanisms to improve vaccine supply and demand predictability and strengthen EU Member States pandemic preparedness.
- **Health Policy Platform webinar**, held on 9 November 2021, for national health professionals' and students' associations with low uptake of COVID-19 vaccination, chaired by the Coalition for Vaccination (lead by EFN, CPME, PGEU). The webinar was organised to understand the relatively low uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in some EU Member States and explore options for support.

Finally, the EFN is a partner (together with other members of the Coalition for Vaccination group) in the EU project 'IMMUNION' ("Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION"), under the European Commission call "[Stakeholder activities to support strengthened cooperation against vaccine preventable diseases](#)" (Call ID: PJ-08-2020). Building on learnings from vaccination efforts at national, regional and global level, this 24 months EU project, that started in April 2021, is aiming at adding value to existing EU and national initiatives, particularly the Coalition for Vaccination, by increasing stakeholder collaboration to address issues of access to accurate information about vaccination in order to increase confidence in and uptake of vaccines. This will primarily be achieved through strategies focused on communication and training. *For more information on this project, see page 40.*



↳ **Digitalisation**

In the context of patient safety and quality of care, digitalisation is high on the EFN policy agenda. Technology, and digitalisation in particular, has the power to drive innovation in healthcare. The digitalisation of healthcare is completely transforming not only the way healthcare is provided by nurses and other healthcare professionals, but also the clinical experience of patients. Therefore, digitalisation in healthcare is of key importance for the EU Member States. To take it to the next level, co-creation with frontline nurses and healthcare professionals is the starting point for implementing digital innovations in healthcare settings. Furthermore, with technology advancements, more and more patients and citizens are asking to have their health data accessible on their smartphone or any other digital device, so they can share these with their nurse and/or other healthcare professionals at different facilities and across borders.

The EU is driving health system reform through digitalisation with nurses providing their views, experience and expertise as end-users. The EFN continues to be very engaged in two Horizon 2020 funded EU projects developing interoperable systems of Electronic Health Records - [InteropEHRate](#) and [Smart4Health](#), attending all the work packages meetings, providing input to all the deliverables the EFN is



Smart4Health

involved in, and disseminating the project and its developments to EFN network. The underlying idea behind these two projects is to empower the EU citizens by developing apps/cloud that would contain their Electronic Health Records (EHR), making their health data available at their fingertips. Citizens could then use it when travelling around Europe and exchange their health data with nurses and other healthcare professionals when needed during their health consultations/emergencies abroad. *For more information on these projects, see page 34.*

The EFN is also part of the eHealth Stakeholder Group on Acceptance of the European Health Data Space (EHDS) and is leading WG1 together with HOPE. In this context, next to participating in all the eHealth Stakeholder Group meetings, the EFN and HOPE, developed in 2021, within WG1 work at the request of the European Commission, a [Policy Paper on Interoperability](#). This Policy Paper brings together insights from a unique group of stakeholders to explore the question: “which concrete solutions do we identify, and actions could we take, to promote cross-border access to health data and interoperability?” Essential to answering this question is the co-creation of data spaces and electronic health records as common agenda topics, and the role of the frontline health workforce to ensure it is implemented in practice.

In 2021, the EFN also published two articles on the topic of digitalisation, that raise that the nursing workforce, which is the largest group of healthcare professionals in the majority of countries worldwide, play a key role in the deployment of the EU EHR and AI technologies in healthcare settings, and that the value of digital innovation in bringing benefits for citizens, patients and health systems will depend on trust:

- ▶ [Leveraging the trust of nurses to advance a digital agenda in Europe: a critical review of health policy literature](#) (published in the [Open Research Europe](#), in May 2021)
- ▶ [Digital transformation of healthcare for the patient](#) (published in the [Open Access Government](#), October 2021)

In addition, the EFN participated, in 2021, in some key meetings on Digitalisation at EU level, as:

- **Meeting with DG Santé**, in January 2021, exchanged views on EU policy developments and heard EFN views on the skills agenda and the specific skills gaps and needs of nurses, including on digitalisation. It is vital to use digitalisation to support the nurses, to free up time for direct patient care. It is estimated that only 31% of their time is attributed to direct patient care which is an inappropriate use of their knowledge and expertise. Therefore, health data space is an important topic for the EFN to inform and monitor.
- **eHealth Stakeholder Group Webinar on Health Data Space**, in February 2021, discussed and encouraged feedback on the Roadmap for the European Health Data Space, and exchange on the digital single market for health, development and deployment of AI systems, and other important issues that should be explored further, as technical/architecture, access procedures, governance and rules, barriers to deployment to digital health and AI solutions.

- **Meeting with DG Reform**, in May 2021, as DG Reform was preparing a multi country call (for June 2021) to support the EU Member States with the digital transformation of the health systems, in particular digital skills of health and care workers. Nurses are key actors in enabling this transformation. DG Reform to discuss collaboration with EFN in this development.
- **Upskilling and reskilling as part of the well-being of the European workforce**, in October 2021, to discuss on the importance to up-skilling and reskilling of workers and healthcare professionals in order to follow the increasing digitalisation process.

For the European Commission, digital transformation means empowering and including every citizen, strengthening the potential of every business and meeting global challenges with EU core values. Therefore, the EFN will continue in 2022 to follow this point very closely and to provide the nurses' views and expertise as end-user.

↳ **Planetary Health/Climate**

Understanding that climate is becoming an important priority at EU level, as its change is evident across and beyond European regions, and in many sectors, including health, and it affects all citizens' quality of life in far-reaching ways, including the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, the EFN has put planetary health/climate as one of the key topics to focus on, in its new [EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#).

Based on a long tradition of informing the public about diseases and promoting health, it is evident that nurses take on an important role as change agents in a variety of activities concerning the health aspects of local and global environmental changes. Nurses can help to communicate about the need to have adequate regulation and actions based on the concept of health-environment co-benefits - actions which have many cascading and beneficial effects for health and ecosystems. The key knowledge and nursing action domains include the prevention of air pollution problems (which accounts for 500,000 premature deaths in Europe and an annual social cost of € 166 billion), the promotion of healthy and environmentally sustainable (plant-based) diet, the reducing and improved management of waste, the promotion of healthy physical activity and low-emission mobility, the deep and complex thinking on how to promote lifestyle that are 'good for the people and good for the planet', and all relevant adaptation and preparedness actions to increase the resilience to future health crisis. The ecological footprint reduction and wellbeing improvement included nurses' actions including nature-based solutions, "green prescribing", building resilience, and nursing care for psychological responses to the threats of environmental changes.

As a starting point in this development, the EFN took the opportunity of the EFN October 2021 General Assembly, to collect some data from the EFN Members on this topic and have an overview on what is going on at country level in terms of nurses/NNA actions related to planetary health, knowing that nurses are the most trusted professionals, being in a privileged position to communicate with citizens on lifestyle change and prevention. *For more information on this data collection, see page 48.*

The EFN also provided input to the EU by responding to the [public consultation on education for environmental sustainability](#), in July 2021, highlighting that more information on environmental issues and challenges, and more focus on people and groups who are currently underrepresented in activities and actions related to environmental sustainability are needed, next to more knowledge of climate change and environmental issues, including scientific aspects, and more practical hands-on ways to learn, including learning outdoors. Also, there is an opportunity to review and create new learning opportunities for students and staff, and inform the redesign of curricula and courses to fully embed environmental sustainability. In order to keep abreast of the latest information on the topic and the ongoing developments/initiatives at EU level, in 2021, the EFN participated in the following meetings:

- **Towards Zero Pollution: Measuring Citizens' Health and Well-Being**, in June 2021, organised by "All Policies for a Healthy Europe". The meeting discussed best practices on data-collection tools and indicators that can help to better understand, monitor and adapt to the impacts of pollution and climate change on human health.
- **Nursing Now Challenge [meeting](#) on "Addressing climate change: the nurse perspective"**, in July 2021, which discussed areas of action for nurses to address climate change in their practices.

- **European Citizens' Panels on "climate change, environment and health"**, in July, October and November 2021, as part of the conference on the future of Europe, with a view to formulating collective recommendations on the future of Europe. *For more information see page 21.*
- **The [meeting](#) on "the future of democracy in times of planetary crises"**, in September 2021, that highlighted the need for more participatory processes and long-term thinking. The EU is starting to apply these principles in the Conference on the Future of Europe involving randomly selected citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of the interlinkages between the degradation of our environment and the health of our societies. However, policymakers often lack reliable data and concrete ways to measure the impact of environmental and climate change on citizens' health & well-being. On 12 May 2021, on International Nurses Day, the European Commission presented its [Zero Pollution Action Plan](#), acknowledging the public health, environmental, moral and socio-economic impacts of pollution, and aiming to include pollution prevention in all relevant EU policies. In March, the Commission and the European Environment Agency (EEA) also launched a [Climate & Health Observatory](#) to provide access to resources related to climate change and human health. The upcoming years are an unprecedented window of opportunity for EFN to lobby the European Institutions for ambitious investments in the nursing workforce so nurses can act on the mitigation of and adaptation to environmental changes. The EU must recognise the unique contribution of EU nurses to the co-design and implementation of EU health and relevant Green Deal related policies that impact on planetary health.

The EFN will continue following up on these Patient Safety & Quality of Care key points in 2022.

4. **OTHER KEY POLITICAL TOPICS EFN LOBBIED ON**

a. **COVID-19**

With COVID-19 still with us after almost two years, the EFN continued to monitor the evolving challenges and evidence in 2021 and highlighted the inequality of access to care, equipment, including vaccines, and other infrastructure challenges such as the stark digital divide between countries and within countries, and the fragmentation across ecosystems. However, with the roll out of the vaccination programme by all the EU Member States, there is hope for a better future for all. The COVID-19 pandemic [reaffirmed](#) the value of well prepared and educated nurses and their critical impact on lower mortality rates and better patient outcomes. It is therefore crucial that the EU Member States invest in nursing and strategies for recruitment and retention which is a vital pillar to ensuring the building of a healthier, safer, fairer, resilient, and more sustainable health systems. Over the year, the EFN followed closely this topic, including meetings at EU level, bringing some key insights and information for EFN lobby work, for example: **Meeting with DG Santé Director-General, Sandra Gallina**, on 6 January 2021, to discuss COVID-19 vaccine and next steps of the Coalition for Vaccination; **Lessons learned from COVID-19**, on 19 January 2021, organised by the Representation of the State of Hessen to the EU, focussing on the potential of Digital solutions in times of pandemic; [Transforming Healthcare: integration of Health and Social Care to tackle disease outbreaks](#), held online on 26 January 2021, with the aim to understand the transformation of the healthcare system, what we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and how we have to be prepare for future unexpected crisis; [Webinar on Building a European Health Union for stronger EU preparedness and response for health crises](#), on 29 January 2021, to discuss on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic for a stronger health security framework, proposed regulations on serious cross-border health threats; **Webinar on "Recovery from Covid-19 - Driving healthcare resilience in the EU"**, on 24 March 2021, to discuss the significant role that healthcare will play in helping fulfil the EU's objectives and what investments in healthcare will be required necessary to drive the relevant digital and resilience transformation; [Turning Principles into reality of more equitable healthcare](#), held on 19 April 2021, to discuss with stakeholders on how to improve the accessibility to the healthcare system in times of crisis; [OECD Forum 2021 on "Equity in Education"](#), held on 17 September, focussing on how COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the education system? How can we improve?; [Eurocarers meeting on "COVID-19, Informal carers and the need for an EU Strategy on Care and Caring"](#), held on 28 September 2021, aiming to analyse the situation of EU care during COVID-19 and highlight the urgent actions needed.

» Social Media

Social media was used to influence the policy process and outcomes. In these times of crisis, the EFN took all the opportunities to raise awareness on the nurses' situation throughout this COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the EFN wanted, with this campaign, to celebrate and to thank all nurses around Europe for their hard work at the forefront of the fight against coronavirus, and using EFN social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) was one of the means to reach also the EU decision makers. Key words/Hashtags: #covid19 #nurses #Preparedness #TogetherWeCan #nurses #nurses2020 #UnitedAgainstCoronavirus #supportnursesandmidwives #nursingnow2020 @EU_Commission @EU_Health @EFNBrussels. Every day, nurses around Europe work with dedication and professionalism to ensure high quality care to all patients. This [EFN social media campaign reached almost 80.000 people and interacted with 4.000 people in one week](#). Recognising nurses' contribution means take care of the health care ecosystem.

» Articles

The EFN also published an article in May 2021 "[The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nurses in Europe](#)", Paul De Raeve, et al, which reflects on the COVID-19 impact on nurses and health service delivery in Europe, based on two EFN reports published in 2020 – [COVID-19 crisis management at national level](#) and [COVID-19 impact on nurses' health & wellbeing – Biological Agent Directive 2020-739](#)

b. Mental Health

Over the last months the wellbeing and mental health of frontline nurses has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Nurses showed their dedication to deal with the stress, death, fear and incredible resilient, doing their job in very poor working conditions, suffering from anxiety and psychological stress, during heavy working shifts and making life-or-death decisions. Thus, putting their mental health and wellbeing at risk resulting in 30% leaving the profession ([EFN Tour de Table, 2020](#)). Some countries already recognised that due to COVID-19 there was a significant psychological health toll on nurses who were continuing to deliver health services in times of crisis, putting their own lives at risk, and being often the only professional with comforting and caring for a dying patient. More than ever, it is crucial to keep our healthcare professionals, and in particular the nurses, protected from chronic stress and poor mental health. Taking this point



very seriously, the EFN followed on the topic over the year and participated in some key meetings. On 10 October, the EFN launched a [joint statement](#) together with Mental Health

Europe, on the occasion of [World Mental Health Day 2021](#), calling for the EU institutions, all EU Member States, the health industry and other health stakeholders, to put in place a series of measures to alleviate the frontline nurses from unnecessary stress and mental suffering. On the occasion of OSHA campaign 'Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load [campaign 2020-22](#)' in October, on [EFN social media](#), the EFN took this opportunity to remind the need to ensure the well-being and mental health of nurses to build a strong and resilient healthcare eco-



system able to address future health crises. The posts of this campaign were **viewed by 15.000 people**.

Over the year, the EFN followed closely the **several meetings on mental health** organised at EU level, bringing some key insight and information for EFN lobby work, including for example:

- [Learning lessons from COVID-19 for people in care](#), on 28 January 2021, organised by the Parliament's Committees on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) and on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) to discuss on the consequences and lessons of the covid-19 crisis, including mental health.
- [Campaigning for a designated European year for Mental Health](#), on 23 March 2021, organised by the MEP Alliance for Mental Health, to discuss on the "European Year for Mental Health" to give the right

attention on mental health issue, and share experience, raise awareness and discover how to make mental health everybody's business.

- [High-level conference](#) on 'Mental health and the pandemic: living, caring, acting!', held on 10 May, and hosted by the European Commissioner for health, Stella Kyriakides, bringing together speakers from different policy and practice areas, and representatives from the EU Member States, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and key EU stakeholders to discuss the mental health impact of COVID-19 along five themes: understanding, living, caring, responding, and acting.

c. Antimicrobial Resistance

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), one of the top ten global public health challenges of our time, is a professional and political concern that has been high on the EU and global health agenda. The [European Commission](#) estimates that antibiotic-resistant bacteria have been associated with the death of 33.000 people in the European Union, and around €1.5 billion each year in healthcare costs and productivity losses. The latest data confirm that across the EU, the number of patients infected by resistant bacteria is increasing every year, which could lead to 10 million deaths per year worldwide by 2050 if no action is taken. To tackle AMR in the frontline, health policies need to be 'fit for purpose', national AMR Action Plans need to reflect the nurses' voice. However, European initiatives to tackle AMR do not take up in a systematic way the health professionals frontline perspectives, in particular the 3 million nurses throughout the EU. The EFN believes that nurses have a [crucial role to play](#) in this, mainly in two key areas: informing and motivating the public; and, preventing and managing the infections. A greater involvement of nurses in initiatives promoting prudent antimicrobial prescribing and management could substantially increase the extent to which these actions can improve health outcomes. In this context, the EFN is participating every year in the [European Antibiotic Awareness Day](#) (EAAD) held on 18 November, coordinated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and marked by national campaigns, through its [social media channels](#) (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) with key posts to raise awareness of the EU policy Makers, the EU Stakeholders, and the public in general, on this key policy topic. **EFN posts reached almost 7.000 views.**



5. Other EU Lobby opportunities for the EFN

Looking to the future, the pandemic has increased the need for a European Health Union, stronger Europe-wide coordination, more resilient health systems and better preparation for possible future crises. As such, in 2021, the EFN took all the opportunities to lobby the EU in that sense and make sure the nurses' voice was heard.

» Global Health Summit



highlight the significant [contribution of nurses](#) (*EFN President speech*) to the health and wellbeing and prosperity of society and to reflect on their expertise, competent and remarkable compassion and care delivered on a daily basis that is invaluable to our health system. The COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed the value of well prepared and educated nurses which equate to lower mortality rates and better patient outcomes. Therefore, investment in nursing strategies for retention and recruitment of nurses and midwives is a vital pillar to ensuring the building of a healthier, safer, fairer, resilient and more sustainable health systems. More than ever, nursing shortage is a key concern, with an estimate 30% of our already reduced nursing workforce leaving the profession due to the enormous burden and difficult working conditions during this pandemic. The global leaders were advised that investing in nursing is a certain investment in the health of G20 nations. The Summit ended with the signing of the [Rome Declaration](#), highlighting the principles and joint action to strengthen health systems and improve preparedness for future health crises.

One of the key achievements for the EFN in 2021 was the EFN participation to the [Global Health Summit](#) (G20), held on 21 May 2021, co-organised by the Italian G20 Presidency and the European Commission, and chaired by Prime Minister Mario Draghi and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen. In attendance were G20 global leaders and invited leaders, heads of international and regional organisations, and representatives of global health bodies, sharing lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Invited as keynote speaker, EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, had the opportunity to



» Future of Europe



Another key outcome, is the EFN participation in the dynamic discussion on the “**Future of Europe**”, namely by participating in the European Parliament EPP Group [meeting](#), with Chancellor Angela Merkel, in April 2021. Digital, demographic and political transition are the watchwords to shape the future of Europe. In this digital future, the healthcare ecosystem has to follow this innovation. Focusing on the upskilling and reskilling of nurses and health professionals, it is essential to give life to a digital healthcare ecosystem. The message that the EFN brought up was that more than ever, it is crucial to reflect on key actions needed to be implemented at EU level to be prepared for any health crisis, as the one we are currently leaving. Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated once again that “[we are not prepared unless we are all prepared!](#)”. Digital, demographic and political transition are fundamental points to be shaped for the future of Europe. Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that “*From this crisis we learned that it is a global challenge, and an EU response is needed. It needs to be better prepared for the future. Health policy needs to have better coordination at EU level*”, explaining that it is necessary to act together in a cohesion way, to respond to the needs of citizens and strengthen Europe. In this context, citizens need to be included. It is key to hear their voice and to make them feel part of the European system. Besides, better coordination on Health policy at EU level means create a more equal, accessible and high-quality healthcare system for all European citizens. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated to all the EU citizens the added value of the nursing workforce to the European healthcare ecosystems – working at the frontline of care, 24/7, at the bedside with the patient, and provided the evidence that nurses’ competencies are central to the well-functioning of the healthcare systems in the EU. It is therefore vital that when co-creating a new “Future for Europe” politicians and policymakers grasp the frontline reality, pushing for health policies that are fit-for-purpose. Building a resilient EU nursing workforce should be a priority, especially now the [National Recovery Plans](#) are submitted and discussed. The EFN urges the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council to co-design health policies that are fit-for-purpose.

In this debate on the future of Europe, next to meetings with the European Commission representatives, the EFN also had the opportunity to take part in **the Conference on the Future of Europe - European Citizens' Panels**, allowing EU citizens to jointly think about the future they want for the European Union, under four **themes**: values, rights, rule of law, democracy, security; climate change, environment and health; stronger economy, social justice, jobs/education, youth, culture, sport/digital transformation; EU in the world/migration. Each of these panels comprise 200 citizens chosen randomly to ensure that they are representatives of the EU's diversity, in terms of geographic origin, gender, age, socioeconomic background and level of education, including young people between 16 and 25.



Invited as key expert, the EFN participated in the theme **'Climate Change, Environment and Health'**, namely:

- › **On 7 July 2021**, where the EFN provided input in the **framing session** to prepare the European Citizens' panels on this topic.
- › **On 1-3 October 2021**, where EFN President was invited as keynote speaker on the **“main challenges in this field and the role of the EU”**. Elizabeth Adams stressed that COVID-19 has shown the need for stronger and much more ambitious European Health policies and governance. This citizens-led Conference should be extremely ambitious for Europe: health should be considered as a transversal component in the conference in a 'health in all policies' or 'all policies for health and well-being' perspective. Adopting a 'health in all policies' approach, and strengthening health systems globally can help create safe, resilient, sustainable, and healthy communities. In this debate, the EFN calls for unprecedented investment and ambitious laws and policies in the recognition of nurses through worthy salaries, the improvement of initial and continuous education, and their engagement in the implementation of modern and holistic public health approaches such as planetary health to make the EU truly resilient.
- › **On 20-21 November 2021**, where EFN Secretary General was invited as keynote speaker on the theme **“Reinforce the healthcare system”**. This panel addresses pressing topics such as the effects of climate change, environmental issues and the new health challenges facing the European Union, relating directly to the EU's objectives and strategies for the future of health, with direct implications for the European research agenda and for the European healthcare systems and lifestyles. Paul De Raeve took this opportunity to stress some key recommendations to reinforce the healthcare system as a stable health care system, attractive to work in, with better pay and working conditions for the healthcare professionals; more health and care research; human connection in healthcare; and reinforce the cooperation of the European countries in health.

Below some key meetings, in which the EFN President strengthened the nursing lobby agenda/input:

» **Meeting with Sandra Gallina - Director-General of the European Commission's DG Santé**



As one of the chairs of the [Coalition for Vaccination](#), Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, represented the EFN at the meeting between the European Commission, represented by Director-General Ms Sandra Gallina, and the three co-chairs of the Coalition for Vaccination (EFN, PGEU, CPME) held online on 6 January 2021, to discuss on the role of health associations – and health professionals themselves as trusted sources on vaccination matters – in communicating on COVID-19 vaccines. It was agreed that the co-chairing associations of the

Coalition for Vaccination would circulate information on EU Strategy for COVID-19 vaccines.

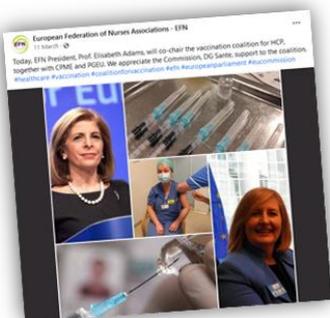
» **Pact for skills roundtable on the health ecosystem**

EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, represented the EFN at the [roundtable](#) on Pact for skills, chaired by Commissioner Kyriakides, Commissioner Schmit and Commissioner Breton on 16 February 2021, which brought together high-level representatives from health professionals, patients, social



partners, research and industry, to discuss the challenges faced by the ecosystem, the needs of reskilling and upskilling, to identify best practices and solutions by stakeholders mobilised under the [Pact for Skills initiative](#) framework and to obtain concrete commitments for action. Invited to share nurses' views, experience and ideas to address the skills, and especially digital skills, for health workforce, EFN President focused on upskilling and reskilling as essential points to be implemented, underlining the importance of education and training for nurses' students undergraduate; qualified nurses with appropriate skills to accelerate their professionalism; AI deliver services in people home with chronic diseases. She stressed that this needs to support patients and workforce. Data management is another key point. It needs to implement knowledge, leadership and advocacy, information sharing and to adopt technologies problem solving.

» **Annual Meeting for the Coalition for Vaccination 2021**



As one of the chairs of the [Coalition for Vaccination](#), Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, represented the EFN at the Annual meeting of the Coalition for Vaccination, that took place online on 11 March 2021. This meeting was an opportunity for DG Santé to present the European Commission COVID-19 vaccination communication efforts, for the participants to get an insight on the new EU project – IMMUNION, to be briefed on the Coalition ongoing activities (as a Covid-19 Manifesto, activities to improve vaccination communication), and for the Coalition co-chairs and the audience to have an open discussion about the next initiatives to be undertaken by the Coalition. Elizabeth concluded the meeting recalling the audience that the Coalition for Vaccination was set up with a focus on

vaccination in general, and that this focus needs to be maintained even though COVID-19 has been an opportunity to enhance the whole vaccination strategy across Europe. She thanked the stakeholders and the European Commission for their efforts around the Coalition and Vaccination.

» **High-Level Conference on Mental health and the pandemic: living, caring, acting!**

Organised by DG Santé, on 10 May 2021, in the context of the [European Mental Health Week](#), running from 10 to 16 May 2021, the European Commissioner for health, Stella Kyriakides, hosted a [high-level conference](#) bringing together speakers from different policy and practice areas, and representatives from the EU Member States, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and key EU stakeholders to discuss the mental health impact of COVID-19 along five themes: understanding, living, caring, responding, and acting. Invited as keynote speaker, EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, expressed that *“Nurses, healthcare professionals and workers across the EU and Europe and around the world face enormous pressure at work, and the pandemic continues to take a heavy toll on the physical and mental wellbeing of front-line healthcare providers. In addition, there is evidence of increasing risk of burnout, post-traumatic and other stress-related disorders among nurses due to operating under ongoing unprecedented pressure and exposure to the virus. Over the last year, since the beginning of the pandemic, nurses have been reporting several important facts that need to be taken seriously into account at EU level, as: dealing with relentless, unprecedented demands to care for patients and those dying resulting in physical exhaustion; facing enormous mental health pressures leading to serious psychological distress (impacted by abuse/pandemic deniers); feeling isolated from their families and are anxious about avoiding infecting their family members.”* More than ever, it is crucial to keep our healthcare professionals, and in particular the nurses, [protected](#) from chronic stress and poor mental health. As mentioned in the EFN Report on [‘Lessons Learned from Ebola & COVID-19’](#) (2020), appropriate support services must be put in place for nurses to address the impact of the numerous stressors.

» **EDQM Webinar on 'Resolution on good reconstitution practices'**

Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, [participated](#) as keynote speaker in the *‘Resolution on good reconstitution practices: a major contribution to the safety of patients’* [webinar](#) organised by the [Council of Europe](#), on 16 June 2021, aiming to examine the reconstitution process in order to promote its implementation in National legislation and in hospital settings. As stated by Elizabeth Adams *“nurses are a huge*



resource to guarantee that the process of optimal reconstitution practices is maximised and implemented.” As the largest group of health professionals in the majority of the countries, nurses’ capacities and knowledge can really help to transform the healthcare system and make pharmaceutical care a professional and political priority.

» **OECD Forum virtual event on Equity in Education**

Invited as keynote speaker, Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, participated in the [OECD Forum](#) virtual event that took place on 17 September 2021 to discuss how COVID-19 is providing an opportunity for education systems to rethink their contribution to the kind of society we ultimately want to live in, analysing the educational response to COVID-19 and the measures taken to cope with learning challenges during the pandemic, in particular, to support the most vulnerable. The crisis showed that the future of education lies in providing valued and recognised path for everyone, including the nurses. The pandemic has shed light on the disconnect between the contributions of essential professionals to the common good and the wages, working conditions and societal recognition earned in return. Aside from better rewarding these professions, the development of educational policies should recognise them as important career choices for individuals. The OECD Forum attracted about 1500 participants, representing governments, parliaments, academia, business, civil society, and media.

» **Autumn Coalition for Vaccination meeting**



As one of the chairs of the [Coalition for Vaccination](#), Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, represented the EFN at the Autumn Coalition for Vaccination meeting, that took place online on 12 October 2021. The participants were briefed on the European Commission communication efforts around COVID-19 vaccination and on the activities on vaccination in the coming years, both COVID-19 vaccination and others; on the Coalition for Vaccination activities in the coming years, highlighting the work being done in the context of the IMMUNION project; on the doctor, pharmacist and nurse student associations surveys administered among their network/members concerning training needs on vaccination. The findings indicated that: while most students feel comfortable replying to citizens’ questions about vaccination, many do not think that vaccination – and how to communicate about it – is sufficiently addressed in their training curricula. The Coalition members agreed on a [joint statement on influenza vaccination](#), launched in conjunction with a communication campaign for Flu Awareness Week (October 18-22, 2021). The Coalition for Vaccination, convened by the European Commission, and chaired by the three Co-Chairs of the Coalition, the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), the European Federation of Nursing Associations (EFN), and the Pharmaceutical Group of the EU (PGEU), brings together European associations of healthcare professionals and relevant students’ associations in the field, as well as associated professional organisations working in the field of public health and immunisation.

» **EU Health Security Committee meeting**

Elizabeth Adams, was invited by the European Commission to represent the Coalition for Vaccination, as EFN President (co-chair of the Coalition) at the [EU Health Security Committee meeting](#), held online on 27 October 2021. Elizabeth presented the ongoing Coalition activities explaining that it has been playing a key role in the Commission’s communication efforts around COVID-19 vaccination.

» **Vaccination hesitancy and low uptake of COVID-19 vaccination**

The European Commission DG Santé, organised on 29 November 2021 a [Health Policy Platform webinar](#) for national health professionals’ and students’ associations with low uptake of COVID-19 vaccination, chaired by the Coalition for Vaccination, Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, chaired the nursing contribution, CPME and PGEU chaired their members insights in order to understand the barriers, challenges and solutions to resolve the low uptake of COVID-19 vaccines and explore options for supporting individual countries. The EFN Members from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, countries that have low COVID-19 vaccination coverage and reported on their particularly difficult situation, including significant pressure on healthcare systems. In addition, ENSA (the nursing students association), were



invited to share their experience at national level regarding vaccine hesitancy and gave some tips on how the European Commission could help support healthcare professionals in addressing it. The National Nurses Associations have been largely side-lined in the Recovery and Resilient Facility process, while the national plans are there to build resilience and to combat the ongoing and future pandemics. Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, stressed the need to build resilient nursing workforce in the countries concerned, knowing that 30% of the nurses already left the nursing profession.

» **Women of Europe Awards**



The EFN having received in 2020 the [2020 Women of Europe Awards](#), in the 'Woman in Action' category, on behalf of the EU nurses, for their instrumental role and exceptional commitment to working on the frontline during the COVID-crisis, the EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, was invited to take part, as moderator, of the Jury for the [Women of Europe Awards 2021 edition](#) – 'Woman in Action' category, that took place on 1st December 2021, jointly organised by the European Movement International and the European Women's Lobby. The jury panel noted the incredible and exceptional women

that were shortlisted for each category which made the selection of the final winner very difficult. There were four categories and the following list the 2021 winners for each category:

- **Woman in Power: Angela Merkel**, Chancellor of Germany, for showing extraordinary political leadership in Europe
- **Woman in Action: Jenny Rasche**, Founder and Chairwoman of the Association "Kinderhilfe Für Siebenbürgen E.V." for undertaking extraordinary actions at grassroots level in Europe
- **Woman in Business: Dr Özlem Türeci**, Physician, Immunologist, Lecturer and Entrepreneur for advancing European integration with entrepreneurial spirit
- **Woman in Youth Activism: Greta Thunberg**, Swedish Climate Change Activist, for women aged 15 to 30 strengthening the voice of young women in Europe

Elizabeth emphasised her pleasure to participate, on behalf of EFN, to such important event to drive a change in culture and positively reinforce the amazing contribution that so many women in Europe make in promoting and advancing European issues.

» **6th Life Course Immunisation Summit 2021**

Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, was invited to participate in the 6th life course immunisation summit organised by EIP on 2-3 December 2021. This [event](#) aimed at examining the current situation, discussing the work that has been done and agree on priorities and actions for the next year. By bringing together the key organisations, opinion leaders, associations, and policymakers EIP are constantly working on what needs to change and what activities need to happen to support the desired change.

6. EFN Members' Lobby Opportunities

It is crucial for the EFN, as a Pan European Organisation, to continuously support and strengthen its relationship with its members by getting a real sense of what is important to them at national level. Taking part in national events is an ideal way of strengthening ties with the members but it is crucial for understanding the key issues at stake in Member States and offering, in return, the EU-level perspective. The EFN appreciates these moments with its members and continues investing in national, regional and local events that promotes the EU nurses' voice. But participating in meetings is not enough to get the political message through to national policy makers understanding the importance of the nurses' views and concerns in the policy process and in the daily clinical practice. As such, it is important for the members to get EFN support directly addressed to key political players to help them to push for their key concerns at national level. As such, in 2021, the EFN provided its support through some supporting letters, and by participating in key national events.



A number of EFN members highlighted differences with their governments on issues such as downgrading the nurses' education, issues with salaries, and the lack of the nursing workforce. In 2021, as in previous years, some EFN Members, for example, Denmark, requested the EFN to send a supporting letter to their national government in relation to providing a decent salary – a solution to the historical pay gap for nurses is key in order to recruit and retain. Nurses are a valuable resource and meeting their needs will allow them to stay within the nursing profession. The European Union fully respects the contribution and potential of nurses to deliver on European wide health policies and initiatives. It is crucial that national governments respect

professional and regulatory dialogue as outlined in the Proportionality Directive (2018/958), requiring governments to engage with all concerned stakeholders, co-designing better working environments. Together we can achieve more, and it is key that political players respect the contribution of the nursing profession and continue to support frontline nurses.

➔ **Participation in EFN Members' national events**

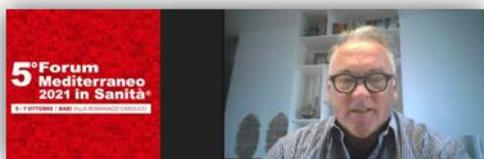
» **Slovenian Congress of Nursing and Midwifery Care**

The Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, EFN Member, invited EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, as keynote speaker at their 13th Conference, organised on 12 May 2021. Elizabeth took this opportunity to highlight EFN ongoing activities, key lobby topics and the projects the EFN is involved in.

» **Conference on vaccination culture: covid-19 lesson learned**

The Italian Nurses Association, Member of EFN, organised on 2 September 2021, a conference on vaccination culture: Covid-19 lesson learned. Invited as keynote speaker, the EFN Secretary General, Paul De Raeve, gave some input on vaccination and nurses contribution to it, providing an overview on who is the Coalition for Vaccination and its activities, what is the IMMUNION project, and explaining the importance of the EU Pact for Skills and the Recovery & Resilience Plans for the EU Member States.

» **5° Mediterranean Forum for Health**



The Italian Nurses Association, Member of EFN, organised on 7 October 2021, the 5° Mediterranean Forum for Health, where members of the Ministry of Health, Unions, Board of Nursing, scientific, and patients' associations discussed on Nursing and the EU Next Generation plan. Invited as keynote speaker, Paul De Raeve, EFN Secretary General, presented the European resources, including the Multiannual Financial

Framework (2021-2027) and the NextGenerationEU, and explained the importance of digitalisation for the future of the nursing profession.

» **10th Croatian Nurses Association Conference**

The Croatian Nurses Association, EFN Member, invited Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, to participate in their Conference organised on 12 November 2021. As keynote speaker she provided an overview on EFN ongoing activities, and priorities the EFN has been following up, namely in times of Covid-19 and its implications for the nursing profession.



» **CNAI 75th Birthday**

The Italian Nurses Association - CNAI, member of EFN since 1971, celebrated this year its 75 years birthday! All over Europe, nurses are strongly engaged to make the difference to the EU policy agenda, to contributing to the EU health policy developments and innovations and working relentlessly to ensure that nurses' voice and contribution is valued and maximised to positively benefit citizens/patients and health outcomes. As such, the Italian nurses have become the backbone of the Italian healthcare system, especially in these extremely challenging times in which



the Italian nurses have suffered a lot. But the Association and many other nurse leaders, have stood by the frontline nurses. The Italian Nurses Association has been part of this supporting process, and we are very grateful CNAI is a Member of EFN for the last 50 years. CNAI commitment to nurses and nursing for 75 years showed its impact in society! [See here the video](#) made by the EFN Secretary General on this occasion, next to some **posts** on EFN social media (@EFNBrussels – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn).

» **DBfK symposium – goodbye Franz Wagner**

On the occasion of the farewell symposium for the retirement of Franz Wagner, CEO of the German Nurses Association (DBfK), the EFN was requested to provide an [article](#) for the special edition Die Schwester/Der Pfleger. Over the last 20 years in which he was the official DBfK representative next to the EFN General Assemblies, Franz input to the developments of EFN lobby work, as the development of the European Nursing Directive which was the catalyst for the creation of the EFN, has been always a priority. Also central to Franz commitment in EFN was mainly the willingness to listen to other nursing leaders, being better informed and drawing upon the expertise of those with more and different knowledge. Franz contributed to that sharing of knowledge. The EFN members also thanked Franz for its commitment & friendship in a [video message](#) that was shown during the symposium.



» **ENSA Conference and Annual General Meeting**



Invited as keynote speaker, Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, represented EFN at the European Nurse Student Association (ENSA) Conference, held online on 6 October 2021, which included a roundtable on the effects of COVID-19 on nursing education across Europe and an address from John Ryan, Director of Public Health, European Commission. Elizabeth introduced EFN, its work and priorities, to the new ENSA members and raised that Covid-19 showed the dedication of frontline nurses to deal with the stress, death, fear and that nurses showed their incredible resilient. Health is in investment not a cost. As such, it is necessary to implement more standardize approach to this profession across Europe. John

Ryan stressed the importance to focus on prevention and to protect our nurses, and for associations to present evidence of how their members worked and operated in order to protect them (important to have information to improve working conditions). This meeting was also a good opportunity for the students to present the results of the survey they conducted between nurses' students to understand more their situation on vaccination in their countries and on nursing education. The AGM, that followed the conference, was a good opportunity to brief ENSA members on the current and future ENSA activities. A new Board was also elected: New President: Edel Marlene Taraldsen; New Vice President: Lukas Hilleke; 3 new board members: Hugo Cunha, Benedicte Henriksen, Pilar Lozano Gonzalez. Over the year, the EFN has also been in close contact with ENSA President, with regular meetings, to make sure that the nurses' students voice is brought to a high level and heard by the EU institutions. In this sense, the EFN made sure to have ENSA also part of the Coalition for vaccination activities and participating in some high-level EU meetings when possible.

» **Nursing Now Campaign**

Officially launched in February 2018, Elizabeth Adams, EFN President served on the Nursing Now Campaign Global Board over the three-years of the [global campaign](#) (2018-2021). Although the campaign has concluded it delivered on the aim to improving health by raising the status and profile of nursing globally and maximise the contribution that nursing makes to Universal Health Coverage, women's empowerment and economic development. The campaign was present in 126 countries with more than 800 independent Nursing Now groups and more than 31,000 young nurses participating in the [Nightingale Challenge](#). 24 countries invested more in nursing in response to the campaign. Seeking to empower nurses to take their place at the heart of tackling 21st Century health challenges, social media and digital developments also contributed to "bind" all these healthcare professionals around the world, offering them a real platform to share and spread their messages, with one key

message: “nurses are vital agents of change that can improve health and transform health care”. To improve citizens’ health and offer a quality healthcare system, it is necessary to invest in nursing [education](#) by offering all nurses to work to their full potential. The [final report of the campaign](#), launched in May 2021, shows that nurses can improve health and transform health care. Governments that want to see health improvements reaching every part of their populations – and leaving no one behind – need to invest in nursing and enable nurses to work to their full potential.

June 2021 marked a new start for the Nightingale Challenge as it became the “Nursing Now Challenge”, carrying on the mandate of the Nightingale Challenge. It is led by Professor Lisa Bayliss-Pratt at Coventry University, in partnership with The Burdett Trust for Nursing. The Board is chaired by Dame Christine Beasley, Trustee of the Burdett Trust for Nursing, in addition, Shirley Baines, Chief Executive of the Burdett Trust for Nursing provides strategic leadership on the Board. Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, continues to represent EFN members on the new Nursing Now Challenge Board. The [Nursing Now Challenge Board](#) is made up of global health experts, representing the WHO regions. They support the strategic development of the Nursing Now Challenge and act as ambassadors regionally and globally. The Nursing Now Challenge will carry forward the ambitious mandate of the Nightingale Challenge and will work with health employers around the world to create leadership development opportunities for 100.000 nurses and midwives in more than 150 countries by the end of 2022.

As the Nursing Now European regional leader, the EFN continued following up, in 2021, on the campaign developments, by participating as a Board Member on the new Nursing Now Challenge and attending some key meetings, as:

- **Nursing Now Webinar “Influence & advocacy - Shaping the future of nursing”**, held online on 02 February 2021, which marked the official launch of the Nursing Now global lobby activity. This was also a good opportunity for the nurse advocates to share their perspectives for 2021 and their experience on advocacy and lobbying, including the best influencing strategies to bring in real change, and the importance of improving nurses’ advocacy skills.
- **ICN Webinar for Nursing Now groups, held online on [09 February 2021](#) and on [18 February 2021](#)**, to meet the ICN team and find out more about the priority of the Nursing Now groups, how they are organised, what are their actions, next to the activities and opportunities to collaborate in 2021, and learn more about the support/engagement, particularly once the campaign was ending in May 2021. The need to bring the campaign to the next level was explained as a response to the pandemic. Barbara Stilwell explained that they would continue to work together with the groups to move in the post pandemic stage. She encouraged the nurses to work together to move into a world where there are better working conditions and better equipment for nurses.
- **“Report launch - Agents of change: the story of the Nursing Now campaign”**, held online on 18 May 2021, where the impactful Nursing Now Campaign report was presented raising how this network is strong and fundamental to spread nurses’ voices. The report shows that nurses are increasing their influence and building a platform to improve healthcare for the future, with the most significant achievements being at national level, where Nursing Now groups have influenced policy and investment. Sixty-three groups reported increased investment in nursing during the campaign. The report also stresses that there has been an increase in nurses in leadership positions, as Chief Nursing Officers and on boards, who are able to exercise greater influence in shaping policy and service delivery.
- **Nursing Now Challenge [meeting](#) on “Addressing climate change: the nurse perspective”**, on 28 July 2021, which discussed areas of action for nurses to address climate change in their practices.
- **Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition** - Violence against healthcare workers, facilities and patients is one of the most serious and overlooked humanitarian challenges globally. The [Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition](#) was founded by Prof Leonard S Rubenstein in 2010 to address the under-reporting of attacks on health workers and facilities in conflict areas.



The EFN members are represented by Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, a member of the coalition with over 30 leading international nongovernmental organisations. The [EFN Position Statement](#) “Nurses in Conflict Areas Need to be more Protected” (2016) provided the mandate for participation.

In recent years, the international community has witnessed an increase in attacks and interference with hospitals, health workers including nurses, patients, ambulances and transport of supplies. Aside from the human toll they take, these attacks compromise the ability to deliver care to populations in great need, impede efforts to reconstruct health systems after war, and lead to the flight of health workers whose presence in a time of great social stress is essential. Such violence is in violation of international law, the Geneva Convention and customary international humanitarian laws. The laws date back over 150 years and state that parties must not attack or interfere with health workers, facilities, ambulances and people who are sick or wounded. Our goal is to promote adherence to international humanitarian and human rights laws that protect health facilities, health workers, ambulances, and patients during conflict. The coalition promotes the security of health workers and services threatened by war or civil unrest. It monitors attacks on and threats to civilian health; strengthens universal norms of respect for the right to health; demands accountability for perpetrators; and empowers providers and civil society groups to be champions for their right to health. As part of the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, we have consistently focused on driving the agenda and lobbying international bodies including the United Nations, the World Health Organization and other key stakeholders including governments throughout the world.

In 2021 the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition released its eighth annual report, documenting the global incidence of attacks and threats against health workers, facilities, and transport around the world. The report cites 806 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in 43 countries and territories in ongoing wars and violent conflicts in 2020. In 2020, 65 health workers were arrested, 152 threatened, 175 injured, 38 assaulted and three subjected to sexual violence in 43 countries and territories experiencing conflict in 2020. During the year, 47 health facilities were destroyed and 128 damaged, while 51 health transports were destroyed or damaged and 26 stolen or hijacked. Thirty-five airstrikes and 94 incidents of shelling and use of surface-launched missiles were recorded as having adversely affected health care.

- **International Centre on Nurse Migration** - EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, represented members on the [Strategic Advisory Group of the International Centre on Nurse Migration](#) (ICNM) which is a joint partnership of the [Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools](#) (CGFNS) and the [International Council of Nurses](#) (ICN). The International Centre on Nurse Migration occupies a key role in establishing dynamic, effective, global and national migration policies and practice that facilitate safe patient care and positive practice environments for nurse migrants. The ethical recruitment and equitable treatment of migrating nurses is a fundamental principle of the International Centre on Nurse Migration. The goals are to: Promote, collect, create and disseminate data and information on nurse migration; Act as a resource centre on nurse migration; Track trends and patterns of global healthcare workforce migration; Analyse current policy, generate policy options and advocate for sound policy concerning nurse migration; Promote, undertake and disseminate research on nurse migration, particularly concerning the migrant nurse workforce; Provide consultation and expert advice on nurse migration; and Offer continuing education about migration.



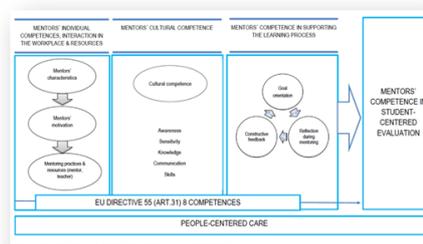
In 2021 the Strategic Advisory Group met (teleconference) on three occasions. Experts on the group include representation from the World Health Organization, The World Bank, International Labour Organization, International Organisation for Migration, World Trade Organisation, National Nursing Organisations and others with specific expertise in migration and workforce issues.

A. QUALITY MENTORSHIP FOR DEVELOPING COMPETENT NURSING STUDENTS (QUALMENT) - ERASMUS+ PROJECT



Co-financed under Erasmus+ and coordinated by the [College of Nursing in Celje](#) (Slovenia), this [EU project](#) addressing the clinical mentor's lack in nursing education and developing a clinical mentor's competence with mentor education for national and international nursing students, has now come to an end.

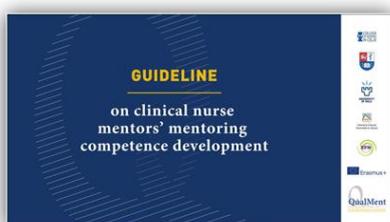
Over the last 3 years (September 2018 – August 2021), the 5 project partners ([College of Nursing in Celje](#) (Slovenia); [University of Oulu](#) - Research unit for Nursing Science and Health Management (Finland); [University of Alicante](#) (Spain); [Lithuanian University of Health Sciences](#) (Lithuania); and the [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#) (Belgium)) made sure to come up with the due deliverables and outcomes of the project, i.e., the development of a training programme for clinical mentors with the objective to increase the quality of clinical practice for undergraduate nursing students, which complies with the [EU directive 2013/55/EU](#), on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications. This course will empower clinical mentors with high-quality skills and competences needed to perform their role and at the same time fill the gap, as there is no systematic approach in developing and implementing the quality courses offering mentors' competences to the nurses in clinical environment in EU.



As a partner in this project, the EFN role related to the [dissemination](#) of the activities, such as social media, regular eBulletins, project leaflet, and Website, also playing a key role in implementing the project's outcome at EU level. Moreover, the EFN was actively engaging with the project partners to ensure that all undergraduate nursing study programmes in the nursing field were developed according to the EU Directive [2005/36/EC](#) (amended by Directive [2013/55/EU](#)) and the [EFN Competency Framework](#).

» **QualMent Project final outcomes**

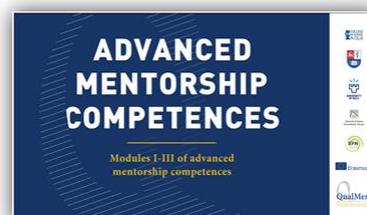
➤ **Guideline on clinical nurse mentors' mentoring competence development**



One of the outcomes is the development of [guidelines for quality mentoring](#) (available in all EU languages on the [QualMent website](#)), which will be helpful in the implementation of quality mentoring, in accordance with the Directive 2013/55/EU. The purpose of these guidelines is to strengthen the development of mentoring competencies of clinical nurse mentors, which can help to improve the functioning of the healthcare system in the EU countries. The guidelines are based on critically evaluated research evidence.

➤ **Advanced Mentorship Competences (Modules I-III)**

Another outcome of the project is the [teaching material](#) developed for mentors, which includes three basic chapters: (1) Introduction to mentorship in nursing, (2) Competence in mentoring culturally and linguistically diverse nursing students and (3) Competence in mentoring assessment and reflective discussion, in accordance with the educational program.



Both outcomes can be found in all the EU languages on [QualMent Website](#).

➤ **Course of Advanced Mentorship Competences for clinical mentors**

Another outcome was the development of the Clinical mentors' competence model and the [Course of Advanced Mentorship Competences for clinical mentors](#). This course will empower clinical mentors with high-quality skills and competences needed to perform their role and at the same time fill the gap, as there is no systematic approach in developing and implementing the quality courses offering mentors' competences to the nurses in clinical environment in EU. This field is of very high relevance, since all study programmes in the nursing field must be developed according to the EU Directive 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU, demanding that the half of all contact hours of each study programme are done in the clinical environment as clinical practice and mentored by clinical mentors. This document is also available in [Finnish](#); [Slovenian](#) and [Spanish](#).

➤ **Multiplier events**

As one of the outcomes of the project, and aiming to share QualMent outcomes, each partner organised in 2021 multiplier events, online and/or face-to-face, for a total of 5 events organised (one per partner. These were a good opportunity to present the project, evidence-based developments of the mentoring model, roles and responsibilities of mentors in clinical setting, experiential learning.

- ✎ **The University of Oulu (Finland)** organised its [multiplier event](#) on 4 May 2021. Nina Hahtela, President of the Finnish Nurses Association and Vice-President of the European Federation of Nurses Associations, stressed the need of nurses and building of support to them, emphasizing the global mass trauma experienced by nurses working in the COVID-19 response. Dealing with high workloads, they have increased patient dependency and mortality, occupational burnout, inadequate personal protective equipment, the fear of spreading the virus to families and relatives, an increase in violence and discrimination against nurses, COVID-19 denial, and the propagation of misinformation. She also reminded that we cannot survive without nurses, of which WHO reported to have a potential shortfall of 14 million by 2030. The meeting brought together experts representing nurses, nursing education, clinical experts, leadership and nursing science research, with a total of 99 international participants from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Hungary, France, Portugal, and Lithuania.



- ✎ **The Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Lithuania)** organised its [multiplier event](#) on 29 April 2021. This was a good opportunity to discuss the quality dimensions of nursing mentorship and reflect on the content of QualMent mentors' training program, including innovative aspects, and to present the results on mentors' satisfaction with the training during the QualMent program piloting.



- ✎ **The College of Nursing in Celje (Slovenia)** organised its [multiplier event](#) on 10 June 2021. The meeting welcomed speeches from Vesna Zupančič (from the Ministry of Health), Franci Janžekovič (from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport), Paul de Raeve (EFN), and Monika Ažman (from Slovenian Nurses and Midwives Association – an EFN Member).

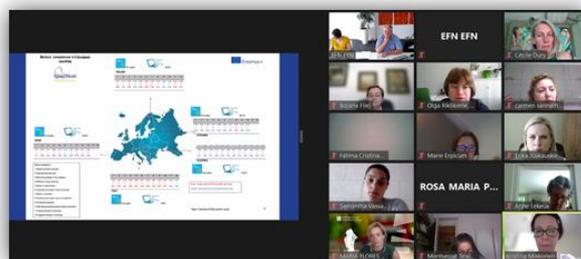


- ✎ **The University of Alicante (Spain)** organised its [multiplier event](#) on 26 May 2021, as a face-to-face, and online meeting. The programme included topics as "The high-quality mentor's competence course in Alicante: adapting teaching to COVID pandemic", "Mentors'



competence in undergraduate nursing student's education in Spain", "Mentors' competence in midwifery education in Spain", "Mentors' competence in familiar and community nursing speciality education in Spain", "The role of professional associations in regulated professions: accreditation of mentors in nursing" or "Social media and innovative educational strategies in the clinical learning environment. Narrowing the gap between Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z".

✎ **The European Federation of Nurses Associations (Belgium)** organised together with the European Federation of Educators in Nursing Science (FINE) and the European Nursing Students Association (ENSA), the online [multiplier event](#), on 17 June 2021, bringing together 85 participants from frontline nurse mentors, nursing students and from FINE members - nursing educators. The recording of the event is available [here](#) and the presentations [here](#).



For more information on the outcomes of these multiplier events, read [7th QualMent eBulletin](#) (published in September 2021).

» Transnational Partners' Meetings

➤ 4th Transnational meeting

Meeting for the 4th Transnational meeting of the project, on 2 February 2021, Online, due to COVID-19 restrictions (organised by the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences – Lithuania, Kaunas), QualMent partners had the opportunity to be briefed on the latest developments, ongoing work, including the implementation of mentor's education, and the next steps of the project. This meeting marked the start of the final phase of the project, working on EU guidelines on clinical nurse mentors' mentoring competence development, as well as the MOOCs on nursing students' mentorship in the EU.

➤ 5th Transnational meeting

QualMent project partners met for the 5th and last meeting of the project on 26 August 2021. Due to the pandemic situation, the meeting was once again held online, being organised by the project coordinator, College of Nursing in Celje. The project partners evaluated the final outputs of the project and discussed the possibilities of the future exploitation and sustainability of the project. All the partners' countries reported high demand for attending the educational course by the clinical mentors, and they are looking forward to implementing the course in the following months. The course will also be accredited in the partners' counties in accordance with the national legislation.



» Dissemination

Leading the development of this [activity](#), aiming to inform all the EU stakeholders and policymakers, the EFN took it forward even in times of pandemic, trying to inform as much as possible on the ongoing project developments and key EU initiatives, through:



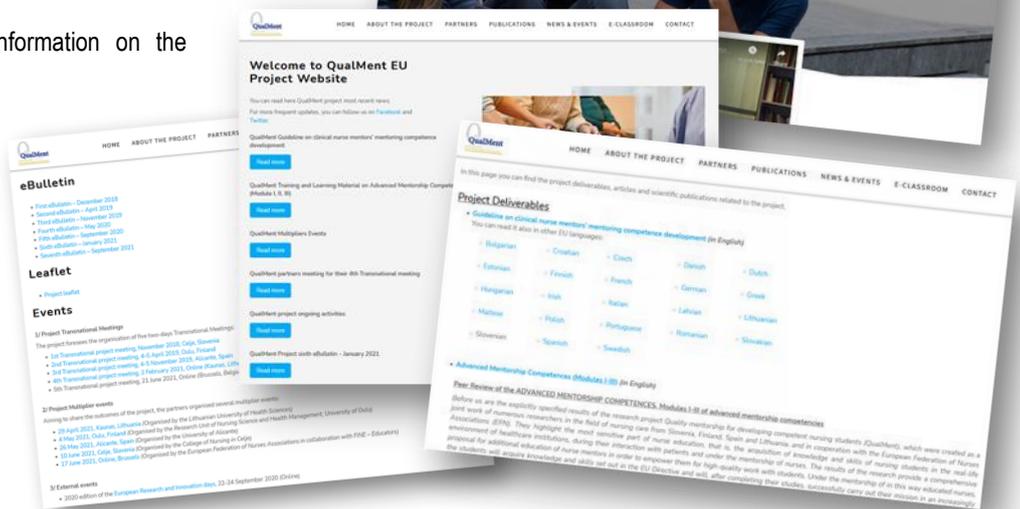
<< eBulletins
[January 2021](#) & [September 2021](#)

All the eBulletins can be found on QualMent [Website](#).

Project Website >>

See www.qualment.eu

Including the most relevant information on the project.



<< Social media - Facebook & Twitter
 (@QualMentProject)

EFN Internal & External meetings >>

Another way to make the project and its developments known was through disseminating it in meetings at EU, national or local levels. From an EFN perspective, the project was disseminated in meetings as:

- » EFN General Assemblies
- » EFN Executive Committee meetings

QUALMENT (ERASMUS+)

Coming to an end (August 2021)- started in September 2018.

www.QualMent.eu

Coordinated by College of Nursing in Celje (Slovenia)

Project objective: Address the clinical mentor's lack in nursing education and develop the clinical mentor's competence with mentor education for national and international nursing students.

Outcomes: The project is finalising the development of Clinical mentors' competence model through a course of mentorship competences and mentorship guidelines which will offer clear and simple instructions to be used in the daily clinical practice of mentoring.

EFN tasks still do: 1 multiplier event & 1 project transnational meeting (online) + validation of guidelines before submitting to the European Commission.

European Federation of Nurses Associations
 The Nurses' Voice

112th EFN General Assembly, 15 April 2021

- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs
- » EU events in which the EFN participated in the European Commission, the European Parliament, EU Stakeholders events, in Brussels or abroad.



<< EFN Website

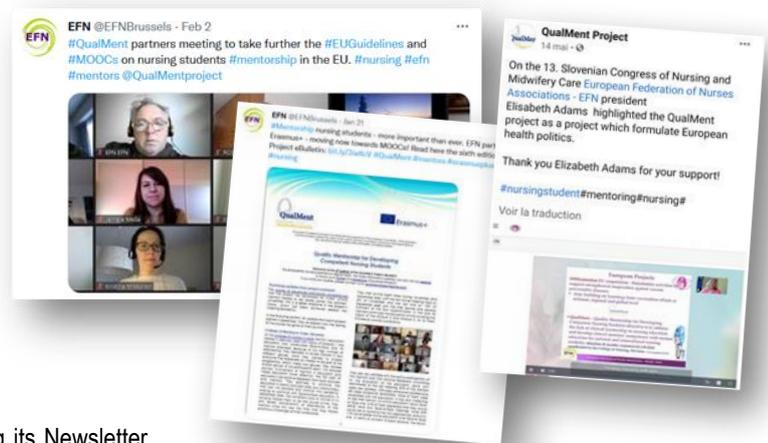
In charge of the dissemination of the project, the EFN included a [section dedicated to the project](#) in its Website with some key information on the project.

The homepage of the EFN [Website](#) is also key in this process of dissemination of the project. As such, whenever it is key, the EFN mentions the project in some of the news it publishes on the homepage.

Social media – Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / LinkedIn (@EFNBrussels) >>

(Key words: @QualMentProject; Mentors; Mentorship)

EFN posts reached almost 30.000 people over the last 3 years. See report [here](#).



<< EFN Updates

The EFN has been using its Newsletter (EFN Update) to spread information on the project to its members, and other key EU health alliances. In 2021, the EFN mentioned QualMent its Updates of: [July-August-September 2021](#). See more EFN Updates: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=875

B. ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS (EHR) H2020 EU PROJECTS

The EFN is a partner in two EU-funded projects, both started in January 2019, with the objective to ensure a greater engagement of nurses and end-users in the development of electronic health records, and working to empower citizens as managers of their own health, unlocking health data from local silos, and encouraging a bottom-up approach for EHR Interoperability. All of these fit within the nursing profession work on integrated care and continuity of care, in which frontline nurses play a central role.

↳ INTEROPERABLE EHR AT USER EDGE (INTEROPEHRATE)



Coordinated by Engineering Ingegneria Informatica (Italy), this 42 months H2020 [EU project](#) (under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme - grant agreement: No. 826106), which started in January 2019, is developing a standardized and unique European extended-EHR to preserve the European assets and

professional ways of working, by addressing the current lack of standardization and security, defining a set of integrated protocols and conformance criteria for mobile apps, supporting secure and portable local storage and backup, released as open specifications. Moreover, the project will integrate these new protocols with technologies for information extraction and translation, to reduce the difficulties in health data exchange related to the different terminologies and languages adopted in different European countries and by different healthcare providers, and is using as central instrument Smart EHR (S-EHR),

leveraging a set of new protocols for secure and cross border exchange of health data. It aims at providing the European citizens with a complete view of their health history, shareable with healthcare professionals and researchers.

The EFN is representing the nurses as end-users, contributing to define nurse-requirements and scenarios to be supported by the new EHR interoperability. The EFN is responsible for dissemination activities at the EU level, as well as assisting in the implementation of the project's outcome once it is finished.

The partners in the project are: [Engineering – Ingegneria Informatica Spa](#) (IT); [Andaman7](#) (BE); [European Health Telematics Association](#) (BE); [DTCA Hygeia – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Center of Athens](#) (EL); [University of Trento](#) (IT); [University of Vienna - School of Law](#) (AT); [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#) (BE); [Fondazione Toscana Gabriele Monasterio per la Ricerca Medica e di Sanitapubblica](#) (IT); [Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Liege](#) (BE); [Ubitech Limited](#) (CY); [University of Piraeus Research Center](#) (EL); [“Bagdasar-Arseni” Clinical Emergency Hospital of Bucharest](#) (RO); [Siveco Romania Sa](#) (RO); [Fraunhofer Institute for Software and Systems Engineering](#) (DE); [Iatrikos Syllagos Athinon](#) (EL); [Byte Computer S.A.](#) (EL).

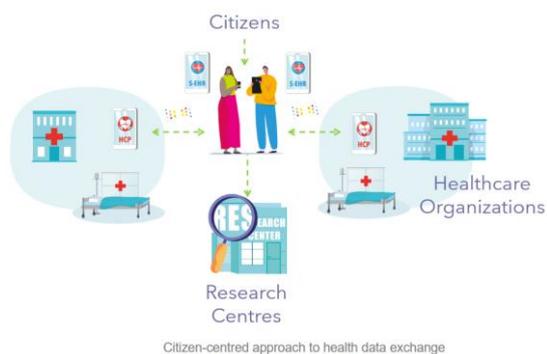
» **Deliverables**

InteropEHRate aims at developing open interchange protocols supporting patient-centred exchange of health records between patients, healthcare actors and researchers. In 2021, all the milestones of the project were achieved since **all deliverables concerning requirements, protocols, architecture and specifications were submitted** to the European Commission, that will now analyse and validate them. The EFN provided input to most of them, making sure the nurses' views, as end-users, were reflected in it. One of the key deliverables was the focus groups for year 3 organised in the context of WP2 (Task 2.1) – user requirements for cross-border Health Records integration V3 - to which the EFN contributed with the input from nurses and nursing researchers. The aim of these focus groups is for the project to get feedback from groups of adult citizens, HCPs and researchers (i.e. end-users) not involved in the day-by-day operation of the project. Following a co-design approach, the InteropEHRate consortium submits intermediate results to focus groups in order to receive their evaluation and validation. The technical partners use the feedback collected from the focus groups to improve project deliverables development. The project deliverables can be found on the project website - See [here](#). The project partners will continue developing the next deliverables in 2022.

i. **White Papers**

Next to the deliverables that the project needs to submit as a result of the work done, on determined time schedule, to the European Commission, one of the main deliverables in 2021 for InteropEHRate was the launch of 2 white papers. The project partners felt that these 2 documents (not foreseen at the beginning of the project) were needed to give a broader dimension to the developments and results of the project.

- Published in August this first white paper entitled [“Unleashing personal health data for care and research: The InteropEHRate approach”](#) gives an overview on how to enable a citizen-centric approach and what technical solutions is InteropEHRate developing; and explains that the main obstacles to health data sharing are the lack of access to health data, identity and consent management, and the inability to donate data for research purposes.
- Published in December this second white paper entitled [“Real-world evidence in health and care research – The contribution of InteropEHRate”](#) explores the background to real-world data challenges in health and care, and draws attention to the growing impetus of hybrid approaches to health and care data collection. This White Paper presents the InteropEHRate research platform composed by the research data sharing protocol, InteropEHRate Research Services and a reference implementation, and how research institutions benefit from these solutions.



ii. **Newsletter**

The project launched its first Newsletter in March 2021, providing an overview on the project and its latest developments. To read it, click [here](#).

iii. Flyer

The project flyer is also available on the [project website](#). It was designed to raise public awareness about the project goals, technical approach, and expected results. It conveys the key messages of InteropEHRate to a wide range of audiences encompassing from the health and technology sector to policymakers and the general public.



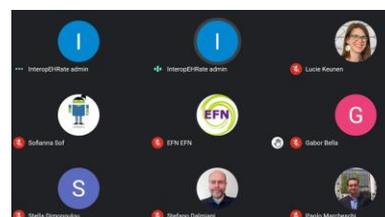
» Project Meetings

i. Work Packages meetings

The EFN is involved in several Work Packages (WPs), namely in WP2 (Architecture for cross-border HR integration); WP5 (Incremental EHRs integration); WP6 (Citizen centered HR interoperability); WP7 (Validation of results); WP8 (Impact, Standardization and Governance); WP9 (Communication, Dissemination and Collaboration), and as such has been participating in all the teleconferences organised over the year. In 2021, the EFN followed the developments of all of them, by participating in all the WPs monthly web calls and in providing its input whenever requested and where needed for all the related Deliverables.

ii. 6th Plenary meeting

Due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the project partners met online for their 6th Plenary meeting, held over 4 half days on 19-20-21-28 April 2021. The partners were briefed on the latest developments of the project, including the scenarios' developments, the governance model, and the exploitation plan, and took this opportunity to review and evaluate the project progress and achievements, and to decide on the strategic orientation and next steps and actions.



iii. IEHR External Stakeholder Board Meeting

As project outcomes, InteropEHRate will deliver open-source specifications for few data exchange protocols aiming at enabling individuals to receive and share in a seamless manner their health data while keeping full control. To maximise impact of outcomes, the project has created an External Stakeholder Board (ESB) aiming at advising the project on the market (emerging) needs, developing synergies with standardisation organisations and engaging any relevant stakeholders. In 2021, the partners met on 26 April, online, for the third IEHR External Stakeholder Board Meeting to get validation feedback from experts external to the consortium on the two white papers launched in August and December.

iv. 2nd Project European Commission Review

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the project partners, participated online in the 2nd project review from the European Commission, that took place on 21 September 2021. The aim of this meeting was to review the project activities and examine if the work plan and the objectives had been carried out, and the deliverables due from M13 to M30 were completed. Overall, the project was compliant with the project grant agreement obligations, except for small details that had to be explained and corrected. For the European Commission the project has delivered exceptional results with significant immediate or potential impact. All the efforts undertaken are reflected in the fact that the level of ambition of the project, as defined through the Key Performance Indicators, is met in many of the indicators. The date for the next review is still to be defined.

↳ CITIZEN-CENTRED EU-EHR EXCHANGE FOR PERSONALISED HEALTH (SMART4HEALTH)

Smart4Health

Coordinated by UNINOVA (Instituto de Desenvolvimento de Novas Tecnologias (Portugal), this 50 months [EU project](#) (under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme - grant agreements No. 826117), that started on 1st January 2019, is addressing the current challenges in EHR with an outstanding consortium that is developing, testing and validating a platform prototype for the Smart4Health citizen-centred health record EU-EHR exchange. The goal is to deploy citizen-centred solutions and services in a digital single market for wellbeing and healthcare, through an easy-to-use, secure, constantly accessible and portable health data and services prototype, thus advancing citizens' health and wellbeing, and digital health innovation. The EFN is representing the end-users, facilitating a co-design with nurses' representatives. The EFN is responsible for dissemination activities at the EU level, as well as assisting in the implementation of the project's outcome once it has finished.

The partners in the project are: [Instituto De Desenvolvimento De Novas Tecnologias-Associacao](#) (PT); [Hasso-Plattner-Institut](#) (DE); [Data4Life](#) (DE); [Healthmatrix](#) (DE); [University of Vienna](#) (Austria); [University Hospital Aachen](#) (DE); [Maastricht University Hospital](#) (NL); [Information Technology For Translational Medicine](#) (LU); [Knowledge Biz](#) (PT); [Elixir - Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine](#) (Lu); [Icahn School Of Medicine At Mount Sinai](#) (US); [Zs Unternehmen Gesundheit](#) (DE); [Ospedale San Raffaele](#) (IT); [Stéftung Hëllef Doheem](#) (Luxembourg); [EASPD](#) (BE); [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#) (BE); [Regiao autonoma da Madeira](#) - Secretaria Regional Da Economia, Turismo e Cultura (PT); [Laboratoire Virtuel Européen](#) (BE).

» Deliverables

The project aims to provide a citizen-centred health platform compliant with EU legislation; a citizen's secure access to own health data and sharing; citizen's empowerment to provide feedback and cooperate with healthcare providers as well as to donate data for societal benefit. As such, it is developing, testing and will validate a platform prototype for the Smart4Health citizen-centred health record with integrated abilities for aggregation of data, for sharing and for data provision/donorship to the scientific community. To follow-up on this development, the project partners continued, in 2021 to develop all the milestones for the project. These are now achieved since all deliverables were submitted to the European Commission, that will now analyse them. The EFN provided input to most of them, bringing in the views of the end-users (nurses) to each of them. The project partners will continue developing the next deliverables in 2022, building on the ones already provided since 2019. The project deliverables can be found [here](#).

» Project Meetings

i. Work Packages Meetings

The EFN is involved in several Work Packages (WPs), namely in WP1 (Citizen- and Professional-User participation: user requirements and performance criteria); WP2 (4HealthPlatform data layer implementation); WP3 (4HealthNavigator portal: services and applications layer implementation); WP4 (Citizen Use Cases: Citizens' health in daily life, work, and healthcare settings); WP6 (Dissemination, Exploitation, Sustainability and Communication); WP7 (Management Administration and Liaison Activities); WP8 (Ethics requirements), and as followed closely, in 2021, their developments. As such the EFN participated in all the regular/monthly teleconferences organised over the year by all the WPs EFN is involved in, and provided input whenever requested and where needed in all the related Deliverables, bringing in nurses' views and expertise in the final documents being provided to the European Commission.

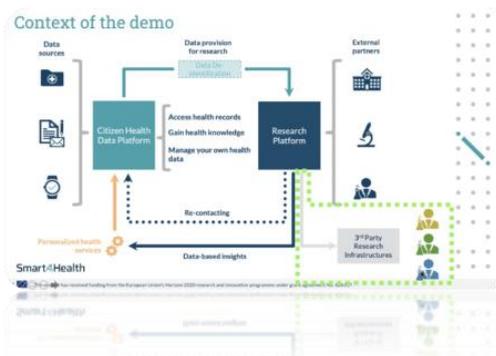
ii. 5th General Assembly

Due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the project partners met online, for the 5th Plenary meeting of the project, held on 20 and 21 January 2021, remembering that in these difficult times for all it is important to keep the engagements with all the partners in the project. The partners were briefed on the ongoing developments of the project and planned activities for 2021 and discussed on some key points as: Wave 3 of co-creation, with some restructuring and prioritisation of the user requirements collected; and refining the methods for validation of UR implementation and assessment of CUC KPIs; platform testing and validation; CUCs development – having been delayed due to COVID-19; Communication & Dissemination activities; and the preparation of the 3rd European Commission review.



iii. 6th General Assembly

The project partners met in Madeira (and online for those not able to travel due to COVID-19 ongoing crisis), for the 6th Plenary meeting of the project, held from 22 to 24 September 2021. The partners were briefed on the ongoing developments of the project and discussed on some key points as: Technological solutions developments (Citizen Health Data Platform (CHDP) and User Portal; CitizenHub and wearables; PhysioSense); Project Management and exploitation; CUCs development – having been delayed due to COVID-19; Communication & Dissemination activities; and the Ethics requirements. The next AGM will take place on 19-21 January 2022, in Milan.



iv. 3rd Project European Commission Review

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the project partners, participated online in the 3rd project review from the European Commission, that took place on 15 April 2021. The aim of this meeting was to review the project activities and examine if the work plan and the objectives had been carried out, and the deliverables due in M24 were completed. Overall, the project was compliant with the project grant agreement obligations, except for small details that had to be explained and corrected. For the European Commission the project is progressing well and has achieved most of its objectives and milestones for the period and will likely provide results with significant immediate or potential impact in the next reporting period. The first concrete results have been reached by the Consortium, with the first versions of the web portal and repositories designed and implemented according to the user requirements identified using a co-creation approach (even if carried out with some limitations due to COVID-19); a robust and secure authentication service is implemented; initial versions of health data gathering and sharing functionalities are available. The Consortium pays much attention to dissemination activities, deliverables are very well described, and the choices taken are usually well-motivated. The date for the next review is still to be defined.

v. Training Session “IP Management in EU funded Projects (Horizon2020/Horizon Europe)”



The project partner & coordinator of the project - HPI, organised a private Intellectual Property (IP) Training Session on “IP Management in EU funded Projects (Horizon2020/Horizon Europe)” moderated by the European IP Helpdesk, as part of the WP6 – T6.7 – Exploitation Plan. The session held on 29 June 2021 was aiming to raise awareness and to better understand this topic to better organize further discussions in the future. One of the key points raised in the session was why is it important to consider IP in Horizon Europe (HEU): IP and exploitation issues are subject to evaluation regarding impact and feasibility of the proposal; The Rules for Participation establish best efforts commitments of

participants to exploit their own results; Therefore, a convincing outline of IP management and exploitation strategies at individual and consortium level within the proposal is a relevant matter; Results of research and development activities require further and often substantial investments to take them to market, which is appealing if the results are well-protected through intellectual property; Finally, properly managing IP in the projects helps participants avoid future conflicts among the consortium. The European IP Helpdesk provides free-of-charge first-line information on IP-related issues aiming to help current and potential beneficiaries of EU-funded projects, as well as EU SMEs, manage their Intellectual Property assets.

EFN DISSEMINATION FOR BOTH EHR PROJECTS

The dissemination activities for EU projects take advantage of the networks of all the partners in the consortium, leading to reach out specific targeted and wider audiences. This is particularly relevant for the activities addressed to policy-oriented and exploitation targets. To increase the visibility of the project and, as such, create awareness of its deployment and exploitation, establish an impact in the European field of EHR is key, as is making this information available in a suitable format to citizens and stakeholders in order to increase the adoption of the project research results. The pan-European multi-stakeholder networks of EFN together with the respective communication activities of all the partners play a crucial role in

this task. The EFN has been active in advertising the two projects across EU-related events, EFN Website, and EFN social media.

EU and EFN internal meetings >>

A way to make a project and its developments known is through disseminating it in meetings at EU, national, or local levels. In 2021, the EFN took all the opportunities to inform the EU stakeholders and EU policy makers on both projects and ongoing developments, as:

- » EFN General Assemblies (e.g.: April 2021)
- » EFN Executive Committee meetings
- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs (e.g.: with DG CONNECT, DG SANTE)
- » EU events in which the EFN participated, mostly online in these times of COVID-19, organised by the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EU Stakeholders, etc. (e.g.: [EANS winter 2021 e-Summit](#), on 19 February 2021; Mediterranean Forum of Health, on 07 October 2021; [European Citizens' Panel of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#), on 21 November 2021; [WHO European Region High Level Experts Meeting on Quality of Care](#), on 2 December 2021)



<< EFN Website

To make the project visible, the EFN included a section dedicated to both projects ([InteropEHRate](#) & [Smart4Health](#)) in its Website with some key information on the projects. The homepage of the EFN [Website](#) is key in this process of dissemination. As such, whenever it is key, the EFN mentions both projects in some of the news it publishes on the homepage, as on [6 January 2021](#), and on [15 April 2021](#).

EFN Updates >>

The EFN uses its Newsletter (EFN Update) to spread information on the projects to its members and other key EU health alliances. In 2021, the EFN mentioned both projects – InteropEHRate & Smart4Health - in its Updates of: [April-May-June 2021](#); [July-August-September 2021](#); [October-November-December 2021](#)



<< EFN Publications



- » In May 2021, the EFN published in the [Open Research Europe](#) an article entitled [“Leveraging the trust of nurses to advance a digital agenda in Europe: a critical review of health policy literature”](#), mentioning both projects. This article is a critical and integrative review of health policy literature examining artificial intelligence (AI) and its implications for healthcare systems and the frontline nursing workforce. A key focus is on co-creation as essential for the deployment and adoption of AI. The value of health data spaces and electronic health records (EHRs) is considered.
- » In October 2021, the EFN published an article entitled [“Digital transformation of healthcare for the patient”](#), in the [Open Access Government magazine](#), which considers the importance of digital transformation to support high-quality patient healthcare, including Electronic Health Records, and mentions both projects.

- ✎ In November 2021, and as part of the work of the eHealth Stakeholder Group (WG1) the EFN is leading, the EFN together with HOPE published a [Policy Paper on Interoperability](#), at the request of the European Commission, mentioning both projects and giving an overview on which actions could be taken, to promote cross-border access to health data and interoperability.

EFN Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (@EFNBrussels) >>

The EFN also uses social media to spread information on EHR and the 2 projects. Key words: #Digitalisation; #EHR; #enduser; #IEHR; #S4H; #Smart4HealthEU; #Interoperate; H2020.



C. “IMPROVING IMMUNISATION COOPERATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION” (IMMUNION)



Co-financed by the European Union Health Programme (2014-2020) under grant agreement No. 101018210, [this 2-year project](#) (2021-2023), launched in April 2021, coordinated by EuroHealthNet and bringing together a diverse consortium of 12 partners, from associations of health professionals (including members of the Coalition for Vaccination (established by the EU in 2019)) to national public health institutes, media experts, and researchers, aims to improve vaccine uptake across the EU by providing access to accurate, evidence-based information about vaccination to health professionals and the general public.

The partners in the project are: [EurohealthNet](#) (BE); [Standing Committee of European Doctors](#) (CPME) (BE); [Pharmaceutical Group of European Union](#) (PGEU) (BE); [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#) (EFN) (BE); [University of Antwerp](#) (BE); [Europa Media](#) (HU); [Euractiv Poland](#) (PL); [Istituto Superiore di Sanità](#) (ISS) (IT); [Institutul National de Sanatate Publica](#) (INSP) (RO); [Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) (CDPC) (LT); [Prolepsis Institute](#) (GR); Vienna Vaccine Safety Initiative (VIVI) (DE).

Building on learnings from vaccination efforts at national, regional and global, the IMMUNION project has been conceived and designed to strengthen the existing [Coalition for Vaccination](#) and improve stakeholder collaboration to increase vaccine uptake across Europe. IMMUNION will specifically increase the visibility and reach of the Coalition for Vaccination through a number of approaches and activities, focused on vaccine communication and education and training of healthcare professionals.

IMMUNION Specific objectives:

1. Dissemination of resources
2. Strengthening Coalition for Vaccination
3. Increasing training opportunities
4. Enhancing collaboration with media
5. Improving overall equity in vaccination

VISION AND OBJECTIVES



Improve dissemination of validated vaccination training materials and resources to health professionals across Europe



Understand drivers of vaccine inequalities within countries and address vaccination coverage issues in vulnerable and underserved populations



Increase training opportunities for health professionals and students on vaccination communication



Strengthen collaboration with media on vaccination



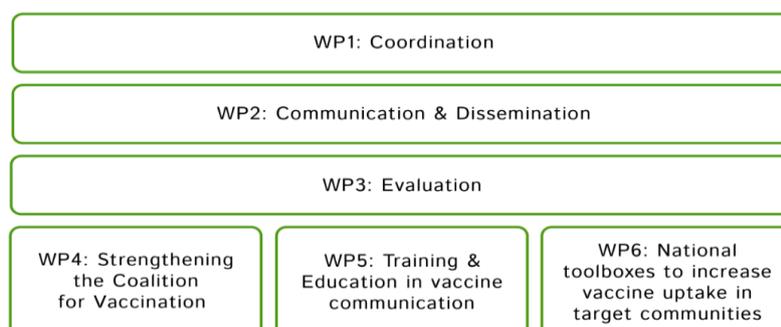
Enhance the Coalition for Vaccination and its long-term sustainability and visibility

IMMUNION will implement a range of activities aiming to provide resources and educational opportunities to health professionals and increase the uptake of vaccines, which include:

- ▶ Further develop the SEKI platform, which will bring together validated training and resource materials for health professionals from sources such as the ECDC, WHO Europe, UNICEF and the EU Joint Action on Vaccination (EU-JAV).
- ▶ A 'Training of Trainers' workshop, to be delivered to professors/trainers in Greece, Latvia and Romania, and at EU-level.
- ▶ Three specialised vaccine and vaccinology workshops for health professionals.
- ▶ Four national toolboxes (for Greece, Italy, Latvia and Romania) of communication and community engagement tools to help improve vaccination coverage rates in specific vulnerable and underserved populations.
- ▶ A [Find An Expert](#) page on IMMUNION Website that will offer journalists, health professionals and the general public the opportunity to find vaccination experts from across Europe, to provide quotes and other information about vaccination for articles and/or to participate in local events.

» [Project Activities overview](#)

Work Packages



IMMUNION is structured around six work packages (WPs). WP1, WP2 WP3 are focused on coordination, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation. They direct the course of the work to ensure the expected outcomes are reached and the three core work packages (WP4, WP5, WP6) achieve their objectives. The EFN is involved in all of the project Work Packages:

- ✂ **WP1 - Coordination of the project** = Actions undertaken to manage the project and to make sure that it is implemented as planned
- ✂ **WP2 - Communication & Dissemination of the project** = Actions undertaken to ensure that the results of the project will be made available to the target groups, used and taken up. This WP is focusing on addressing specific target groups promoting training, education, information sources and exchange as well as the engagement with the European Coalition for Vaccination.

- ✂ **WP3 - Evaluation of the project** = Actions undertaken to verify if the project is being implemented as planned and reaches the objectives.
- ✂ **WP4 - Strengthening the Coalition for Vaccination** = Actions undertaken to strengthen cooperation amongst Coalition for Vaccination partners to increase confidence in and uptake of vaccines.
- ✂ **WP5 - Training and Education in Vaccine Communication** = Actions undertaken to provide additional educational opportunities to health professionals and trainers working in the field of vaccination.
- ✂ **WP6 - National toolboxes for increasing vaccine uptake in target communities** = Actions undertaken to address mis/disinformation in four target countries and to increase vaccine uptake in vulnerable communities.



» Deliverables

Overall, the project is advancing well as regards the deliverables to be developed. Next to the Deliverables to be submitted to the European Commission that are not yet public, some deliverables were already made available for the external audience :

► Linked to WP2 (Communication and Dissemination):

- Project Logo
- Project Website providing an overview of the project consortium, aims and objectives, and initiatives - www.coalitionforvaccination.com
- Social Media (@coalitionforvax): [LinkedIn](#); [Facebook](#); [Twitter](#)
- 2 Newsletters - [August 2021](#) & [November 2021](#) (That includes an [article](#) from EFN “Three million frontline EU nurses could boost vaccination uptake”)
- Project Flyer - https://coalitionforvaccination.com/assets/content/IMMUNION_Leaflet.pdf
- Overview of [related initiatives](#) that share the mission of IMMUNION, as the European [Joint Action on Vaccination](#).

► Linked to WP4 (Strengthening the Coalition for Vaccination):

- **Pan-European Survey results** - Over the summer, IMMUNION conducted a pan-European survey among healthcare professionals, which revealed that whilst most nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and other professionals feel confident to respond to their patients' questions about vaccinations, this is not always the case for all professionals. More than 3,300 healthcare professionals across Europe took part in this survey aiming to understand their needs and preferences around training and education on vaccines and vaccination. The majority of survey respondents stated that they would be willing to follow extra courses on vaccination to gain in confidence and be better equipped to answer their patients' questions. Healthcare professionals are particularly interested in online trainings and materials focusing on the benefits and effectiveness of vaccines. The full report is available [here](#).
- **Ask an Expert** – Tool to be made available soon on IMMUNION Website – aiming for healthcare professionals and journalists who write about vaccines and vaccination to connect with colleagues and trusted

sources to improve communication about vaccines. An [application form](#) is available for those who would like to apply as Expert.

» **Project Meetings**

i. **Work Packages Meetings**

Being involved in all the project Work Packages (WPs), the EFN has been following closely their developments. As such, the EFN participated in all the regular/monthly teleconferences organised over the year, and provided input whenever requested and where needed in all the related Deliverables, bringing in nurses' views and expertise in the final documents being provided to the European Commission.

ii. **1st General Assembly and Kick-Off of the project**

Due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the project partners met online, on 13 & 15 April 2021 for their first Plenary meeting, to formally launch the project. This meeting was a good opportunity to make sure that all the involved parties were aware of the project's key objectives, activities and deliverables; and to discuss and gather feedback from the partners as well as from the Scientific Advisory Board regarding the work and outputs of each IMMUNION Work Package. Martine Ingvorsen, Policy Officer, DG SANTE (European Commission) reminded that the European Commission work in the field of vaccination focuses on implementing the Council Recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases (2018), which calls for a large number of individual actions at EU level to fight vaccine preventable diseases. This is being implemented by the European Commission together with the EU Member States, international organisations and other stakeholders, in accordance with a publicly available [roadmap](#). IMMUNION is part of this broader context.



iii. **Coalition for Vaccination meetings**

Part of the IMMUNION consortium, and meeting on regular basis to discuss the project ongoing work, the 3 coalition co-chairs – EFN, CPME, PGEU, are looking forward to the project developments over the 2 years expected to strengthen the coalition long-term sustainability and visibility, providing capacity for the Coalition to reach its ambitious objectives and advance its mission to support delivering accurate information to the public through healthcare professionals, combating myths around vaccines and vaccination, and the exchange of best practices on vaccination. The co-chairs are hoping to go beyond general messaging on social media to truly understand how healthcare professionals want to receive training, and to develop user-friendly tools that are taken up in practice across Europe. The focus is on speaking to healthcare professionals, and through them to the public, in the aim of achieving actual impact in increasing vaccine uptake.

» **DISSEMINATION**

All partners are actively engaged in dissemination of the project messages and results. The messages communicated by IMMUNION, and the European Coalition for Vaccination, are based on European Commission, WHO, ECDC reports on immunisation campaigns and best practices in communicating vaccination (e.g.: [EXPH expert panel report](#)). Aiming to inform the EU stakeholders and policymakers, the EFN is taking all the opportunities to inform as much as possible on the ongoing project developments, through:

EU and EFN internal meetings >>

In 2021, the EFN presented the project at the:

- » EFN General Assemblies (e.g.: April 2021)
- » EFN Executive Committee meetings
- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs (e.g.: with DG CONNECT, DG SANTE)



EU events in which the EFN participated, mostly online in these times of COVID-19, organised by the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EU Stakeholders, etc. (e.g.: Conference on vaccination culture - Covid-19 lesson learned, September 2021)

EFN Updates >>

The EFN uses its Newsletter (EFN Update) to spread information on the projects to its members and other key EU health alliances. In 2021, the EFN mentioned the project in its Updates of: [July-August-September 2021](#); [October-November-December 2021](#)



<< EFN social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (@EFNBrussels)

The EFN also uses social media to spread information. Key words: #vaccination, #VaccinesWork, #ImmunizeEurope, #strengthenvaccination



III. BUILDING ALLIANCES

Building alliances and creating partnerships with key organisations to work on particular issues has been the top priority for the EFN, as this is a means of strengthening civil society in the policy-making process and to get successful outcomes not only at EU level but also at national and local levels. In 2021, the EFN continued this process of building alliances and strengthening the ones already established with the key EU non-state stakeholders built up throughout the years, which is now providing consortia for the Horizon 2020 highly respected and influential to make innovation happen and implemented. Building alliances is also a good way to work closer to the EU Institutions and get the message across their lobby agenda. 2021 was a very fruitful year in terms of building alliance and bringing the nursing voice at EU level, with EFN participating in a large number of events, from the EU and the EU stakeholders.

► Sectorial Professions' Organisations

For the last 20 years, the EFN has been collaborating very closely with the sectorial professions' organisations based in Brussels, working on common topics, as Education (DIR55), Workforce, and Patient Safety and Quality of Care, including digitalisation - the 3 EFN main lobby topics, and participating in the same EU projects, as: [QualMent](#), [InteropEHRate](#), [Smart4Health](#), [IMMUNION](#), etc. In 2021, even with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the EFN continued this good collaboration and exchange of views on key concerns, as: Education - DIR36/55, Workforce, skills, value-based health systems, Patient safety, Blockchain, Artificial intelligence, ehealth, Digitalisation, Vaccination, COVID-19, Mental health, Climate, through regular meetings with the EU Health Stakeholders as: The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union ([PGEU](#)), representing community pharmacists at EU level; The Standing Committee of European Doctors ([CPME](#)), representing the national medical associations across Europe; The Council of European Dentists ([CED](#)), representing the dentists and promoting oral health in Europe; The European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy / Physiotherapy ([ER-WCPT](#)) representing the physiotherapy profession at European Level; and the European Midwives Association ([EMA](#)), representing midwifery organisations and associations at EU level. The EFN is looking forward to continuing, in 2022, this important collaboration in the EU lobby arena, to build strong alliances to jointly push for quality of care, patient safety, and health system reform. Next to these NGO's, the EFN was also in close collaboration and/or started building alliances with the following organisations:

► DigitalEurope



[DigitalEurope](#) is the leading trade association representing digitally transforming industries in Europe. In 2021, the EFN had close contacts with their representatives, in the context of Digitalisation and AI discussions. Health is one of the 2 priorities for DigitalEurope, that believes that the most important thing about digital tools is to support HCPs in their work. The EFN will continue looking closely at these developments in 2022.



► European Agency for Occupational Safety and Health (EU-OSHA)

[EU-OSHA](#) is the European Union information agency for occupational safety and health, and its work contributes to the European Commission's [Strategic Framework](#) on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 and other relevant EU strategies and programmes. As the Official Campaign Partner of 'Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load [campaign 2020-22](#)', the EFN continued to work very closely to OSHA, in 2021 to create a safe workplace to improve trust and safety for all the EU healthcare professionals. The EFN looks forward to continuing to strengthen this close collaboration in 2022.



► European Health Management Association (EHMA)

The [European Health Management Association](#) is a non-profit membership organisation that focusses on enhancing the capacity and capability of health management to deliver high quality healthcare. In 2021, the EFN was in close contact with EHMA in the context of an EFN partnership in EHMA's proposal for an Erasmus+ call on Alliances for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills (DG SANTE) on the topic of EU Workforce Skills. Being still assessed, the EFN looks forward to strengthening its close collaboration with EHMA in 2022.

➤ European Movement International (EMI)



The [European Movement International](#) is a pan-European network that provides a platform to encourage and facilitate the active participation of citizens and stakeholders from a cross-section of sectors in the development of European solutions to our common challenges. As such, the EFN had been in contact with EMI in 2021 for possible collaboration on topics as Digitalisation & Workforce, participating also in some of their meetings. The EFN is looking forward to strengthening its close collaboration with EMI in 2022.

➤ FINE-Europe



The [European Federation of Educators in Nursing Science](#) (FINE-Europe) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, aiming to promote excellence in nursing education, as well as nurse educators' skill acquisition and maintenance. In 2021, in the context of the EU Erasmus+ project – [QualMent](#), the EFN is a partner of, the EFN in collaboration with FINE organised a successful event on 17 June 2021, bringing together frontline nurse mentors, nursing students and nursing educators. The EFN is looking forward to continuing this good collaboration with FINE in 2022.

➤ Microsoft



[Microsoft](#) is very active in the health sector, working every day with health organisations, communities and partners around the world to help improving health systems. Microsoft acknowledges the value of nurses in healthcare and recognises nurses as the ones to engage with if the use of innovative technology in healthcare is to be successfully implemented. As such, and in view of fostering the collaboration between end-users and industry providers, the EFN continued, in 2021, to develop a strong collaboration with Microsoft, namely on digitalisation and the needs and challenges of nurses, to be able to empower them in achieving more by using digital technology. The EFN will continue and strengthen this close collaboration with Microsoft in 2022.

➤ EU-OSHA



Working to make European workplaces safer, healthier and more productive - for the benefit of businesses, employees and governments, [EU-OSHA](#) promotes a culture of risk prevention to improve working conditions in Europe. Many Europeans are exposed to dangerous substances at work, which presents major safety and health concerns for workers, not to mention unnecessary costs for employers and society. In 2021, the EFN was acknowledged as Official Campaign Partner of the '[Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load campaign 2020-22](#)'. For years, the EFN has been [working](#) to promote and protect nurses and the nursing profession and this partnership with OSHA will allow improving their working conditions and their safety. This is an ambitious and important goal for improving the [working conditions](#) for all healthcare professionals, above all nurses, with more equipment and greater safety. Every day, 3 million nurses in Europe are subject to physical strain from lifting or moving people, repetitive movements, which cause musculoskeletal disorders and other physical risks. As such, on the occasion of the [European Week for Safety and Health at work](#), the EFN launched its social media awareness campaign on the issue of Musculoskeletal Disorders, which aims to shed the light on this delicate topic ((@EFNBrussels – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn - key words: #OSHA #workplacesafety #protection #safety #staysafe). This campaign was important starting point to create a working place where nurses and all the healthcare workers feel safe and protected. Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system. Protect them by creating safe workplaces, means create a better environment for patients as well: safer health care professional, means better health care. The EU-OSHA-EFN common topics: Pillar of social rights for healthy workplace in Europe, digitalisation, sharps injuries, chronic diseases, hazardous drugs.



World Health Organisation (WHO)



Over the last 20 years, the EFN has been engaged with WHO Europe in different ways, as: by having an observer status in WHO Regional Committee (RC) meetings, by participating in several WHO & WHO RC meetings, and by contributing to consultations/debates, to make sure that the nurses' views were taken into account in the debate. WHO EFNMA is having an Observer status within EFN General Assemblies. Aiming to continue and strengthen this close collaboration with WHO & WHO Forum, namely on Health systems reform, Digitalisation, Primary care, and Nursing workforce, the EFN has been looking closely at these developments and is participating in the WHO Regional Committees' meetings. Next to EFN being an official partner of the WHO European Region, the EFN Secretary General, Paul De Raeve, is part of Roster of Experts of the [WHO Digital Health Technical Advisory Group](#), a group that harnesses the power of digital health to help achieve [WHO's triple billion goals](#) as set out in our [General Programme of Work](#), and [Sustainable Development Goal 3](#): Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. The EFN is also part of the [WHO Consortium of non-state actors](#).

In 2021, the EFN participated not only in the WHO regional Committees meetings but also on a few other ones of key interest for the nursing profession as:

- the [First "Meeting of Minds"](#), held on 2-3 December – aiming to be a High Level Experts meeting on quality of care in the WHO European Region in the post-COVID-19 era. Invited as keynote speaker, Paul De Raeve, EFN Secretary General, shared EFN best practices on [violence against nurses](#) stressing the importance of the [Biological Agent Directive 2020/739](#) and the importance of the [Recovery and Resilience Plans](#) implementation connected to the [European Semester](#), and stressed the importance of having a resilient nursing workforce. If not, systems will collapse!
- Second [high-level Bonn Dialogue](#) on Environment and Health, held online on 8 December, aiming to support the identification of priorities and the formulation of possible commitments to be put forward by the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region at the 7th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, expected to be held in 2023, and to give new impetus to the promotion of health and well-being through informed decisions on the local planning and management of green and blue spaces. For the EFN, this is a good opportunity to follow-up on its lobby topic on Climate/planetary health developments.
- Launch of [Nursing and Midwifery Euro Roadmap](#), held on 10 December, aiming to support countries in the WHO European Region in strengthening the nursing and midwifery professions, emphasizing the importance of placing nurses and midwives on the political agenda. The roadmap reflects the priorities of the [European Programme of Work 2020–2025](#).



The EFN is looking forward to strengthening this cooperation in 2022.

V. A FUTURE FOR EVIDENCE BASE POLICYMAKING

A. EUROPEAN NURSING RESEARCH FOUNDATION



Founded by the EFN in 2013, within the context of the increasing emphasis placed on nursing research at EU level to secure reliable evidence from which to base future workforce decisions, the European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF) is aiming at making the bridge between evidence and policy-making process and act as a contact point for EU policy-makers and politicians, and analysing and compiling what already exists in terms of nursing research in the EU Member States, in order to convert existing data into evidence-based advocacy for the EU policy-making process.

Although 2021, as 2020, was challenging for the nurses all over the globe, with a whole profession relentlessly caring for millions of citizens due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ENRF continued its work of setting the future of the EU nursing research, by monitoring the work of the EU Institutions and focussing on integrating nursing research into the EU policy arena. Bringing the nursing researchers' knowledge together to strengthen the delivery of evidence-based nursing to add rigour and credibility to the political decision-making and outcomes is key, knowing that nursing research is a growing field even though it remains a relatively new activity in many countries.

↳ ENRF Governance body

The ENRF Board of Directors (BoD) is responsible for defining the policies and priorities of the Foundation in accordance with its mission, vision and constitutional aims, included in the [ENRF strategic plan \(2021-2024\)](#) that contains a set of values, content and theme for the Foundation to work on. The ENRF [governance body](#) is currently composed by three Directors, for a 2-year mandate (2020-2022), and the ENRF Secretary General, Paul De Raeve:

- Founding EFN Director and ENRF President:



Anne Marie Rafferty
Royal College of Nursing - UK

- ENRF Directors:



Izabella Uchmanowicz
Wroclaw Medical University – Poland
ENRF Vice-President



Andreas Xyrichis
King's College London – UK
ENRF Treasurer

- ENRF Secretary General:



Paul De Raeve

Taking into account that the mandate of the current ENRF Board of Directors is coming to an end, elections will take place in January 2022, to (re-)elect the Board of Directors. All the EFN Members are entitled to nominate and elect four Directors, of which one is the Founding Director, representing the EFN voice.

↳ **ENRF activities**

In 2021, and in the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the ENRF continued taking forward its activities started in 2020, even though reduced, in compliance with the agreement of the October 2019 EFN General Assembly, in Greece, and in the context of rethinking the future of the Foundation. Which meant for the ENRF Office the circulation of only 3 Newsletters over the year, less Briefing Notes, attending less meetings, no social media, etc. But keeping always the EFN members, the ENRF Board of Directors and the ENRF Reference Points informed on the key topics for nursing research ongoing discussions at central moments, and developing some key documents as agreed by the EFN Members in 2019.

i. Evidence Based Policy Briefs

This is one of the main achievements for the ENRF in 2021. The ENRF cooperates closely with the EFN to understand the research evidence the EFN needs to underpin EFN political lobby objectives, and as such prioritise ENRF research activities, and generate knowledge and evidence to support the work of EFN. As agreed by the October 2019 EFN General Assembly, in Greece, the ENRF has been requested to develop a few Policy Briefs, as first ENRF activities' concrete outcome, to support the EFN Members and EFN EU lobby process. As such, and in follow-up of the work started in 2020, the ENRF approved so far 3 Policy Briefs in areas of scientific and political interest, linked to the current health research priorities in the European Union: [Care left Undone](#); [Digitalisation](#); [Nursing Mentorship](#) (as presented to the EFN April 2021 General Assembly, and available on ENRF [Website](#)), and is currently developing a 4th one on Advanced Practice Nurse – in parallel to the EFN work on this topic. These Policy Briefs aim to support the EFN lobby work towards the EU institutions and the ENRF developments. As a next step in this process, the ENRF Board of Directors is already looking at the work to be developed in 2022 and foresees the development of 2 more Policy Briefs linked to the EFN lobby agenda/work: “violence against nurses” and “nurses’ role in planetary health”.



ii. Review of the ENRF Constitution

Following up on the reflections of the EFN Members in 2019 on the future of the ENRF, the EFN Members approved at the EFN October 2019 General Assembly to review the ENRF Constitution, taking into account the recommendations of the EFN Working Group on the future of the ENRF, and of the EFN Executive Committee. In 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors finalised this review started in 2020, together with the ENRF lawyer, Hans Neiryck, making sure the changes introduced are compliant with Belgium law. Approved by the EFN Executive Committee in September 2021, and by the EFN Members in October 2021, this will now be published in the Moniteur Belge.

iii. Stakeholder & Policy Mapping

In order to influence policy, it is important to dialogue with some key actors and stakeholders, knowing that the ENRF overall objective is to bring its research priorities to the attention of the European Commission and by doing so influence the EU political agenda (See [EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#) & [ENRF SORP 2021-2027](#)). As such, it is important to understand the political dynamics of policy making and to have in mind who is doing what at EU level and who to be in close contact with to influence the agenda setting. Looking at the ENRF Action Plan and Priorities for 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors discussed and approved, at their meeting in February 2021, the need to have a stakeholders' & policy mapping for one of the ENRF priorities, to help analyse, understand, and create effective strategies to promote ENRF SORP and [Policy Briefs](#), and providing an overview on the policy actors to be in touch with to influence research policy and support EFN work. At their meeting in May 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors discussed a 1st draft proposal and agreed to have a 2nd version focussing only on Digitalisation as the ENRF has a [Policy Brief on Digitalisation](#), and as a follow-up of the [EFN event on digitalisation](#) in the European Parliament, February 2020 - seen as a good case study to start such mapping, as it links to a successful event. At their meeting in August 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors discussed and approved the revised version of the [stakeholders' & Policy mapping](#), seen as a good document to be used to get feedback from the ENRF Reference Points. It is key that people see what is in for them, so that they engage with the ENRF.



iv. Health & Research EU agenda

As part of its [SORP 2021-2024](#), and as in the previous years, the ENRF followed very closely, in 2021, the latest discussions and developments as regards health & research EU agenda, taking into account the launch of the new EU framework programme - [Horizon Europe](#), knowing that nursing research is key to contribute to the new EU Health Research Programme that would focus on improving health conditions across all EU Member States through better prevention, access, and treatment. Nursing Research is essential to make it fit-for-practice! This is an opportunity to take advantage of all these funds available to strengthen nursing research, and make change happen for the EU Health systems. To make sure that the nurse researchers and the EFN Members were prepared for this Horizon Europe calls, namely under “[Cluster Health](#)”, the ENRF participated in several meetings at EU level, and reported the key information to the EFN Members and the ENRF Reference Points through its some Briefing Notes, namely: [Horizon Europe – Get Yourself Prepared and Engaged](#) (13/02/2021); [Horizon Europe for Health](#) (26/02/2021); [Horizon Europe – Follow-up](#) (22/03/2021); [Gender Equality in Horizon Europe](#) (10/04/2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) (08/05/2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) (2) (04/09/2021); [Horizon Europe - Get Prepared for Submission](#) (3) (20/10/2021). The ENRF will continue following this up very closely and seek opportunities for collaboration under this new EU framework programme.



v. Communication

Crucial to enhance effectiveness, communicating on the ENRF activities is key for making it visualised, to get the message across, and to engage ENRF reference points to the work of the ENRF, making the Foundation more visible, especially at EU level. In 2021, in order to share important information on nursing research at EU level, the ENRF Board of Directors, the ENRF Reference Points, and the EFN members received ENRF [Briefing Notes](#), on regular basis, and 3 [ENRF Newsletters](#). The ENRF Office is also regularly updating the [ENRF Website Homepage](#) with key information.

- » **Briefing notes** - Seen as a way to provide information on key meetings and the latest developments at EU level to the ENRF Board of Directors, the ENRF Reference points, and the EFN Members, the ENRF Office published in 2021 several key Briefing Notes: [Agreement on the EU Social Fund](#) (February 2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Yourself Prepared and Engaged](#) (February 2021); [Horizon Europe for Health](#) (February 2021); [Horizon Europe – Follow-up](#) (March 2021); [EU4Health Programme](#) (March 2021); [Gender Equality in Research & Innovation](#) (April 2021); [Gender Equality in Horizon Europe](#) (April 2021); [Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values \(CERV\) work programme 2021-2022](#) (April 2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) (May 2021); [Erasmus+](#) (May 2021); [Citizens Science – Involvement of citizens in co-creating Science Agenda](#) (June 2021); [Horizon Europe - Get Prepared for Submission](#) (September 2021); [EU4Health 2022 Programme](#) (September 2021); [Switzerland supporting dialogue to create a research centre in south-eastern Europe](#) (September 2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) (20/10/2021); [MEPs pushing for academic freedom in EU treaties](#) (13/11/2021). All the ENRF Briefing Notes are available on [ENRF Website](#).



- » **ENRF Newsletters** - In 2021, the ENRF Office published 3 Newsletters: [April 2021](#), [July 2021](#) & [November 2021](#), referring to the main news for nurse researchers/nursing research at EU level that can support and influence their daily work. As Founding organisation, the EFN also takes the opportunity to mention the ENRF in its Newsletter ([EFN Update](#)) when it is seen relevant. All ENRF Newsletters are available on [ENRF Website](#).

- » **ENRF Web & Social Media** - Updated on regular basis with key information/news, the ENRF Website (www.enrf.eu) is aiming at making the Foundation more visible.

Next to a Homepage with latest news' overview, the ENRF Website also provides information on its history, governing body, Constitution and Internal Regulation, mission and objectives, Policy Briefs, and Dissemination

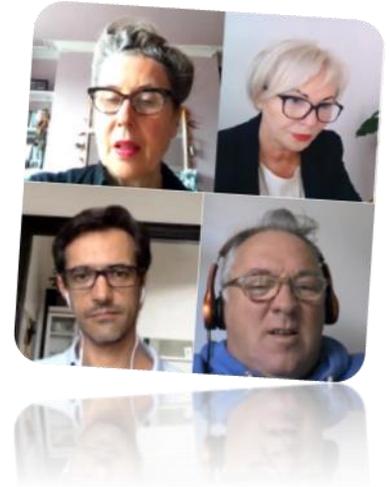


(Newsletters, Briefing Notes, Press Releases, input to the EU, articles). The Website is managed by the Brussels' Office and will evolve as the Foundation will. The ENRF also has a Facebook (@enrf.foundation) & Twitter (@Enrf_Foundation) accounts, aiming to make the ENRF more visible, even if for the moment these are not so much used, as agreed by the ENF Members, in October 2019.

vi. Board of Directors meetings

In 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors met on:

- ▶ **1st February (Online)** to reflect on the work done so far, and on the activities to be done in 2021, setting up some key priorities, as: finalise the revision of the ENRF Constitution as approved by the ENF October 2019 General Assembly, in Greece; develop a 4th Policy Brief on Advanced Practice Nurse; and develop a Stakeholder & Policy Mapping. The BoD also approved the 3 Evidence-Based [Policy Briefs](#) 'Care left Undone', 'Digitalisation', 'Nursing Mentorship', developed in 2020; the [ENRF SORP 2021-2024](#); and the ENRF Budget Plan 2021-2024.
- ▶ **20 May (Online)** where the ENRF Directors discussed the ongoing work as approved at the previous BoD meeting (1st February).
- ▶ **31 August (Online)** where the ENRF Directors discussed and approved several documents, including the revised ENRF Constitution and the ENRF Stakeholder & Policy Mapping. The ENRF Directors also discussed the 4th Policy Brief being developed and suggested some amendments to it. This document is being amended and should be available soon.
- ▶ **14 December (Online)** where the ENRF Directors discussed the next steps for their work in 2022, including the ENRF Budget plan for 2022.



vii. ENF Executive Committees & General Assemblies

As done since its establishment, the ENF Executive Committee and General Assembly were, in 2021, continuously informed on the ENRF ongoing work, and the ENRF Directors' reflections reported to, and discussed at the ENF Executive Committee meetings and General Assemblies.

viii. Building Alliances

Building alliances and creating partnerships, next to strengthening the ones already established with key EU stakeholders and EU policy decision-makers is key for an organisation to grow and to achieve concrete outcomes. Contributing to an efficient information flow, the ENRF participated in 2021 in some key EU meetings and looked to build reliable alliances with key EU health and social Stakeholders, and policy and decision-makers, to ensure that nursing research get higher on the EU Research and Innovation Agenda. The ENRF Office will continue this important alliance building in 2022.

ix. EU Consultations

Answering European Commission consultations is a great opportunity to increase the ENRF visibility and making sure the nursing researchers' voice is heard at political level. As such, the ENRF always provides [input](#) to the European Commission consultations when seen relevant. Unfortunately, in 2021 due to the sanitary crisis, no major EU consultations were made available for the ENRF to provide input.

↳ [Conclusion](#)

The ENRF has the ambition to become a reference point for the dialogue between nursing researchers and EU policymakers, with the purpose of translating knowledge into health and social policies with the ultimate objective to improve our knowledge base when reforming national health and social care ecosystems, and to become the scientific reference point for nursing research to enhance the EU health and social policy agenda. The ENRF Directors, together with the ENRF Secretary General, will continue to develop the Foundation further, building on a solid expertise from the ENRF BoD, and well identified priorities.

V. EFN DATA COLLECTION

To gather quantity and quality evidence, the EFN uses data collection (through email, online surveys, or during the EFN General Assemblies with the Tour de Table item) as key component in its daily lobby work. This allows to provide the EU institutions and key EU stakeholders with up-to-date information/data to take informed decisions and consider the next steps on crucial topics. As such, in 2021, the EFN and its members undertook and provided input to some key surveys/consultations:

A. EFN

✎ Gender and Profession-based Violence against Nurses

Seen as a crucial point for the nursing profession, the EFN Members were requested, on the occasion of the online April 2021 EFN General Assembly, to provide information on the possible gender or profession-based violence and/or discrimination that nurses may be experiencing at the national level. Useful information was provided to the Brussels' Office, which compiled and analysed in an [EFN Report on "Gender and Profession-based Violence against Nurses"](#), used as a lobby document towards the EU institutions, and in particular the European Commission, DG Justice, DG Sante and DG Employment. The data collected highlights that violence against nurses has reached epidemic proportions, with anecdotal evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic pointing to a sharp increase across countries in Europe. Nurses take the brunt of the public's aggression since they are frequently the first point of contact. And this takes many forms, including death threats, punches, sexual harassment and verbal insults. Evidence on the frequency and impact of violence on nurses is accumulating, pointing to negative physical, mental, social and professional effects.

✎ Planetary Health

On the occasion of the October 2021 EFN General Assembly, the EFN Members were requested to provide information on the nurses/NNA actions related to planetary health. This information is key for the EFN to lobby the EU institutions and in particular the European Commission, and the European Parliament, when they start implementing EU legislation on the Green Deal. The better understanding that the EFN has in relation to the national situation of each country, the better it will be able to lobby the EU institutions in shaping fit-for-purpose solutions and initiatives in the healthcare sector. The EFN Members are very concerned with this topic and are ongoing some key actions as working with national alliances of health professionals interested in climate change; preparing strategies focussing on how to move the agenda into the workplace and the nurses' daily lives; pushing the governments and political parties to have planetary health included in their political agendas and strategies; initiatives to educate politicians and society in general about the care that must be carried out to improve health, from all points of view (health and non-health, including environmental entities); new National nurse education curriculum that includes environmental health. The report is still being drafted and should be made available soon on [EFN Website](#).

✎ Advanced Practice Nurse

The increasing and changing health needs of the patients and citizens of Europe require nursing to take on advanced practice roles to support safe and effective health service delivery. As such, the EFN undertook a mapping exercise of current Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) frameworks across Europe. An online survey was distributed amongst the 35 EFN representing countries. The EFN Members fed back on 60 items, concerning key features of advanced practice nursing, with a view to mapping existing developments and understanding state of the art. The aim was to update and consolidate the EFN Members' work on advanced practice nursing over the years, intending to assess progress to date and identify avenues for future efforts to focus on developing standardisation of advanced nursing practice across Europe. The report uncovered a high level of variation in how implementation has taken place across the 20 EFN member countries which reported having an established APN framework. This goes from the definition adopted by the country to the level of training required to qualify and practice as an Advanced Practice Nurse. For instance, only 14 of the 20 countries with an established APN framework adhere to the [definition provided by the International Council of Nurses](#), with the rest either adopting the EFN '[Workforce Matrix 3+1](#)' definition or developing their own definitions of APN. Furthermore, only 11 countries out of the 20 EFN members with an APN framework reported the existence of a law establishing minimum educational requirements to qualify as an advanced practice nurse. These requirements, however, vary significantly amongst countries. For instance, in some countries, the minimum requirement is a master's

degree whereas in others the requirement is a postgraduate certificate or a diploma, which are both below a master's degree level. The same level of variation was observed for educational pre-requisites needed to begin APN education and as well as for number of ECTS credits required to progress from a general nursing degree to APN. Some countries reported that the level of education needed to qualify as a Nurse Practitioner, or a Clinical Nurse Specialist is consistent with advanced practice nursing level. A report is currently being drafted and should be available soon on [EFN Website](#).

B. EFN Members

✂ **Providers Authorized to Administer COVID-19 Vaccines**

The EFN Member from Italy - Italian Nurses Association (CNAI) - conducted a study in April 2021, among the EFN members, on the providers authorized to administer COVID-19 Vaccines, to understand the countries' differences and government decisions in terms of extended authorization to other healthcare/non healthcare providers.

✂ **Student nurses education/financing**

The EFN Member from Ireland – Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) - conducted a study in May 2021, among the EFN members on the education of student nurses and any financial support provided to them.

✂ **Nursing profession as "heavy and hazardous professions"**

In the context of the discussions at national level to have the nursing profession included in the "heavy and hazardous professions" in Cyprus' legislation following the consequences of the pandemic, the EFN Member from Cyprus – Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association (CYNMA) - conducted a study in December 2021, among the EFN members on if Nursing was legislatively considered to be among the "Heavy and Hazardous" professions in their countries or not, and the benefits for Nurses and for the Profession by having nursing in that category or the reasons for not being placed in it.

✂ **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

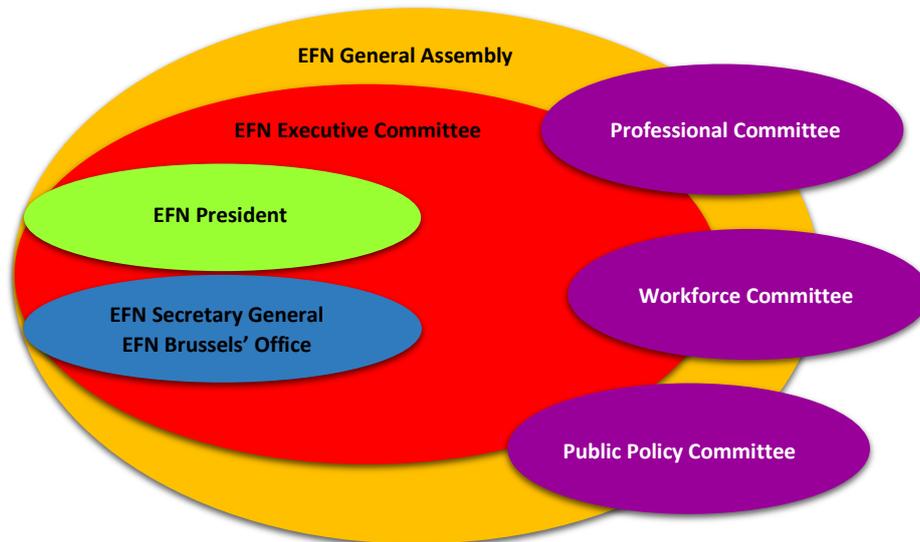
The Lithuanian Nurses Organisation was invited to participate in discussions about the new model of continuous professional development for healthcare professionals, including nurses, organised by the Ministry of health of Lithuania. Aiming to provide information on the experience in the other EU member countries, the Lithuanian Nurses Organisation conducted a study in December 2021, among the EFN members to gather EFN members' experience/current reality as regards CPD processes.

All the data collected are crucial information for the EFN members to lobby at national level on key policy topics.

VI. EFN GOVERNANCE

A. EFN STRUCTURE

The EFN governance structure consists of the General Assembly, which includes 36 National Nurses' Associations, supported by the Executive Committee, the Professional, Workforce and Public Policy Committees, and the EFN Brussels Office.



B. EFN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As the EFN governing body, the General Assembly meets twice a year to discuss the important issues related to the EFN lobby work that can influence the nurses and the nursing profession at EU and national levels, to discuss and endorse key Policy and Position Statements, and to work on several EU projects.

The EFN General Assembly is constituted by:

- ↳ **Members** - drawn from the [National Nurses' Associations](#) from the twenty-seven EU Member States + Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, UK, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, AUVB-UGIB from Belgium.
- ↳ **Observers** - International Council of Nurses ([ICN](#)); World Health Organisation ([WHO](#)); and the European Nursing Students Association (ENSA).

To view the full list of the EFN Members, updated on regular basis, please visit the [EFN Website](#).

In 2021, due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the EFN Members could not meet face-to-face, and as such the two General Assemblies had to take place online, with a reduced agenda, on 15 April 2021, and on 14 October 2021. The minutes of the General Assemblies are not publicly available. The EFN Members can access them via the Members' section of EFN Website. In 2022, the EFN General Assembly will meet on 21-22 April 2022, in Brussels and on 13-14 October 2022, Ljubljana (Slovenia).

C. EFN COMMITTEES

Constituted in 2006, in order to prepare and facilitate the EFN lobby process towards the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers (EU Presidency), the three EFN Committees meet twice a year during the EFN General Assemblies in order to discuss and produce recommendations to the General Assembly on the steps forward to achieve concrete outcomes related to specific issues. In 2021, due to the ongoing pandemic and the EFN General Assemblies being organised online, the 3 Committees could not meet as done usually. Instead, the 3 Committees' leads made sure that the most important EFN Policy Statements (ONE per Committee) were discussed, amended/approved in plenary (online), to allow the EFN Office to take its lobby work further.

- **Professional Committee:** In 2021, the Professional Committee led by Nina Hahtela, from the Finnish Nurses Association, discussed and approved, in plenary, the [EFN Policy Statement on Nurses Mentorship](#) (April 2021). The October General Assembly discussed the EFN Policy Statement on Advanced Practice Nurse, but did not approve it as presented, requesting to bring the final amended version (reviewed by the EFN APN Working Group members present at the GA) to the April 2022 EFN General Assembly, for final discussion/amendments/approval.
- **Workforce Committee:** In 2021, the Workforce Committee led by Aristides Chorattas, from Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, discussed and approved, in plenary, the [EFN Position Statement on Violence and Harassment Against Nurses](#) (April 2021). The October General Assembly discussed the EFN Policy Statement on “Sustaining a Resilient EU Nursing Workforce” but did not approve it, requesting to bring the final amended version to the April 2022 EFN General Assembly, for final discussion/amendments/approval.
- **Public Policy Committee:** In 2021, the Public Policy Committee led by Monika Azman, from Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, discussed and approved the [EFN Position Statement on Nurses Co-Designing Artificial Intelligence Tools](#) (April 2021). The October General Assembly discussed the EFN Policy Statement on “Building a European Health Union” but decided not to approve it, preferring that the EFN continues to work with the Conference on the Future of the European Union when invited as participant/speaker on behalf of the nursing profession.

D. EFN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The [EFN Executive Committee](#) is constituted by seven members: President, Vice-president, Treasurer and four delegates elected by the EFN Members National Nurses’ Associations. They meet at least twice a year (in between each General Assembly) to discuss key issues for the EFN, to prepare recommendations for the General Assembly, and to follow-up on the General Assembly decisions. An extraordinary Executive Committee meeting usually takes place the day before each General Assembly to set up the last recommendations for the meeting, and anytime needed to take any urgent decision or discuss a key topic.

a. Meetings

In 2021, the EFN Executive Committee met several times: on 5 February (Online) and 3 September (Online) for their regular meetings, and on 4 June, 17 June, 3 August, 5 August (all Online) for the EFN Executive Committee extraordinary meetings. In 2022, the Executive Committee will meet for their regular meetings on: 4 February and 6 September (Online).

b. Elections

As the EFN members did not meet face-to-face in October 2021, due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the EFN Executive Committee elections took place on 11-12 October 2021, online, through the EFN Website. As a result of this online election that went very smoothly, the EFN members elected by majority the following members of the EFN Executive Committee: EFN President: Elizabeth Adams (Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, Ireland) (reelected) (47 votes in favour); EFN Treasurer: Yves Mengal (Fédération Nationale des Infirmières de Belgique (FNIB), Belgium) (reelected) (47 votes in favour); 2 Members of the Executive Committee: Philomena Ní Sheaghda (Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, Ireland) (reelected) (47 votes in favour); Susan Aitkenhead (Royal College of Nursing, UK) (New) (46 votes in favour & 1 vote against), for a two-year term (2021-2023). As a result, the new Executive Committee is constituted as follow:



President: Ms Elizabeth Adams, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, *Ireland*



Vice-President: Ms Nina Hahtela, Finnish Nurses Association, *Finland*



Treasurer: Mr Yves Mengal, Fédération Nationale des Infirmières de Belgique (FNIB), *Belgium*

Four Executive Committee Members:



Mr Aristides Chorattas, Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, *Cyprus*



Ms Philomena Ni Sheaghda, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, *Ireland*



Ms Monika Azman, Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, *Slovenia*



Ms Susan Aitkenhead, Royal College of Nursing, *United Kingdom*

E. EFN BRUSSELS OFFICE

In 2021, the EFN Brussels Office, consisting of the Secretary General, the Secretary, and the Communication & Social Media Advisor, supported by consultants in the area of Accounting, Social Security System, Web and IT management, Legal Affairs and on specific policy areas, especially during the EFN General Assemblies, continued focussing on implementing the EFN Strategic Lobby Plan 2021-2027.

Having a proactive approach to setting the EU health and social policy agenda by influencing the major policy initiatives from the European Institutions, which in turn impacts on nurses and the nursing profession, is the core business of EFN. Translating this political journey into the ‘language’ of the EFN members, through the EFN Updates, Press Releases and Briefing Notes, bridges the distance between Brussels and the governmental capital of the Member States where national policies are developed. Informing and keeping the EFN members up to speed is essential in putting them in an advanced position vis-à-vis their national governments. But equally important is the engagement of the EFN members in the Brussels’ lobbying process ‘to put a human face to policy-making’.

As such, having an EFN Office in Brussels equipped with highly educated and motivated staff, and empowering members to exchange views on specific EU policy areas, thus enabling them to go back home with the capacity to influence national governments is, in fact, the ‘raison d’être’ of EFN.



Paul De Raeve
EFN Secretary General



Fatima Pereira
EFN Secretary



Alessia Suma
EFN Communication
& Social Media Advisor

VII. COMMUNICATION

For the EFN, it is essential that its members have the necessary information, knowledge and experience to take informed decisions on the key issues related to the nursing profession, not only during the EFN General Assemblies, but also when an item is being discussed and/or needs urgent attention, decision and/or action. In order to be as reactive and proactive as possible, the EFN Brussels Office regularly provides the EFN members with up-to-date information on the most recent items discussed at EU level, through updates, briefing notes, press releases, position statements, and articles. Most of these documents are made available to the public via the EFN Website: www.efnweb.eu.

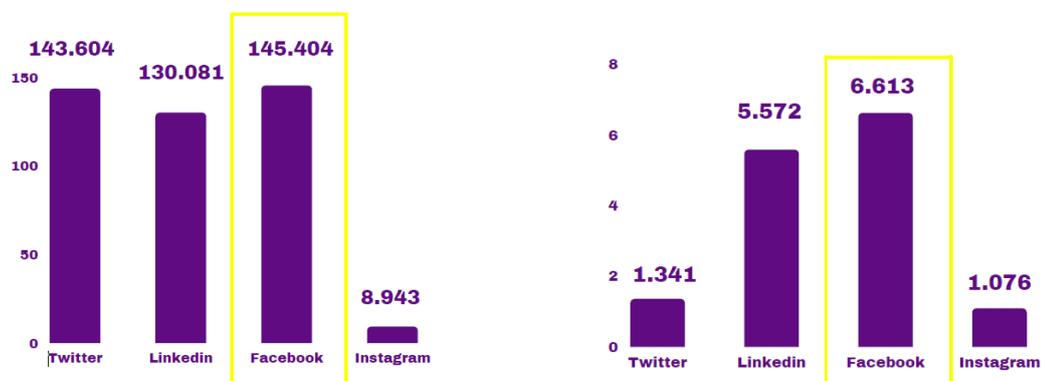
➤ EFN Website

The [EFN website](http://www.efnweb.eu) is used as a key communication channel to disseminate information to the EFN members, the EU health stakeholders, key decision-makers, and the public in general. Updated on regular basis, the EFN Website reflects the EFN on-going activities and relevant information which shows the dynamics and impact of EFN on EU policymaking.

➤ Social Media (SM)

Social media is nowadays an important tool to share and exchange information with the EU lobby arena. In order to be more visible in the social media network and to get EFN messages closer to the European stakeholders, the MEPs and Commission people who use social media to communicate, and the nurses all over the EU, the EFN is using [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/efnbrussels); [Twitter](https://twitter.com/efnbrussels); and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/efnbrussels). Overall, we can say that in 2021, **EFN social media campaigns reached 574.960 people from all over the world**, with a top of 145.404 people on Facebook, 143.604 people on Twitter, 130.081 people on LinkedIn, and 8.943 people on Instagram; and 14.602 people interacted or reacted to it, with a top of 6.613 reactions on Facebook (See [here](#) the EFN Social Media Summary report for 2021). See below more details.

How many people visualised EFN Social Media posts? vs How many people interacted with your posts?



📌 EFN Facebook: /efnbrussels

The EFN Facebook account has currently 2.891 followers. In 2021, the EFN was quite active on Facebook, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 12/05/2021, seen by **9.118 people**, followed by the one on 29/03/2021, seen by 7.586 people, and the one on 01/04/2021, seen by 7.263 people.

European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
12 May · G

Today it is our day! Happy International Nurses Day to celebrate whom, every day, is at the #frontline, 24h on 24h, 7 on 7 days, for sake of all people.
#IND2021 #frontlinenurses #healthcareheroes #EFN



Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

9,118 People reached 610 Engagements [Boost post](#)

Soth Hoffman, Eras Hums and 92 others 1 Comment 49 shares

European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
29 March · G

We are all together to fight the invisible enemy! We will make it! 401 Army General Hospital of Athens, GREECE. Είμαστε όλοι μαζί για να νικήσουμε τον άδραστο εχθρό! Θα το καταφέρουμε! 401 Γενικό Στρατιωκό Νοσοκομείο Αθηνών.
#nurses #covid19 #vaccinesavvelves #efn #ensa #europeancommission #europeanparliament
See Translation



Visit the COVID-19 information Centre for vaccine resources.
[Get Vaccine Info](#)

Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

7,586 People reached 2,179 Engagements [Boost post](#)

116 21 Comments 22 shares

European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
1 April · G

COVID19 greeting from our colleagues in Slovakia. Teamwork has been key to get us resilient frontline. Hope the Slovakian government and the EU recognises our relentless commitments.
#nurses #covid19 #vaccinesavvelves #efn #ensa #europeancommission #europeanparliament



Visit the COVID-19 information Centre for vaccine resources.
[Get Vaccine Info](#)

Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

7,263 People reached 448 Engagements [Boost post](#)

Raymond Mateo, Lenka Kromkova and 32 others 15 shares

EFN Twitter: @EFNBrussels

The EFN Twitter account has currently 890 followers. In 2021, the EFN was quite active on Twitter, with many tweets, and a **top tweet** published on 10/10/2021, **seen by 18.707 people**, followed by the one published on 11/03/2021, seen by 5.260 people and the one on 02/05/2021, seen by 4.153 people.

EFN @EFNBrussels · Oct 10

A resilient nurses' workforce means a more resilient and robust healthcare eco-system.
Give them the right tools to build resilience!
#EFN #covidpandemic #digitalskills #covidpandemic #frontlinenurses #Covid19 #education #skills



1 9 118 1 1

EFN @EFNBrussels · Mar 11

Today, EFN President, Prof. Elisabeth Adams, will co-chair the vaccination coalition for HCP, together with CPME and PGEU. We appreciate the Commission, DG Sante, support to the coalition. #healthcare #vaccination #coalitionforvaccination #efn #europeanparliament #europeancommission



2 4 1 1

EFN @EFNBrussels · May 2

EU nurses working around the clock to get EU citizens vaccinated.
#VaccinesWork #ImmunizeEurope #Covid19pandemic #CoalitionForVaccination #EFN #ENSA



5 8 1 1

EFN Instagram: @efn_brussels

As for Facebook & Twitter, the EFN is using Instagram to publish the most relevant information. The EFN Instagram account has currently 221 followers. In 2021, the EFN was quite active also on Instagram, with a **top post** published on 16/02/2021, **seen by 155 people**, followed by another one on 15/02/2021, seen by 124 people, and one on 06/10/2021, seen by 115 people.



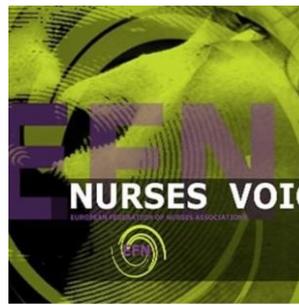
Voir les statistiques [Booster](#)

Alimé par iam_becky21 et 1 autre personne

efn_brussels Industry plays a central role in the upskilling of nurses in the healthcare systems, when empowering patients and using the EHR. We need to make processes, clinical pathways, more efficiently and TRUST is key! Innovation in and for Europe is super important!

#nurses2020 #publichealthmatters #healthcare #digitalcare #employeeengagement #nursing #nursingnow #europeanparliament #eucommission

16 février · Voir la traduction



Voir les statistiques [Booster](#)

Alimé par lukas.hilleke et 5 autres personnes

efn_brussels We start an exciting lobby week with first being invited to the European Commission roundtable on Skills Pact with a main focus on Digital Skills for nurses and later this week we will be the keynote for the EANS Winterschool where we will focus on EFN lobby succes and impact. Co-creating EU legislation to support 3 million EU nurses is our core business. #nurses2020 #publichealthmatters #healthcare #digitalcare #employeeengagement #nursing #nursingnow #europeanparliament #eucommission

15 février · Voir la traduction



Voir les statistiques [Booster](#)

Alimé par tecnodreams.r.l et 11 autres personnes

efn_brussels Invited as keynote speaker at the European Nursing Students Association Conference, EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, highlighted the nurses' dedication and commitment in a period of uncertainty as this one with Covid-19, and reminded that "Health is an investment, not a cost!"

#EFN #ENSA @ensa_nursing #conference #nursingprofession #nursestudents #europeancommission #europeanparliament #ensa_nursing Thanks again Elizabeth for coming 🇪🇺 ❤️

6 octobre · Voir la traduction

📄 EFN Social Media Reports

You can have a detailed overview of **EFN Social Media posts** by theme, done over 2021, through the small **reports** developed for each of them:

- ✓ [Mentorship](#) (2019-2021 – EU project)
- ✓ [EU Pact for Skills](#) (16/02/2021)
- ✓ [Nursing Research to influence policymakers](#) (19/02/2021 & 14/08/2021)
- ✓ [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (05/03/2021)
- ✓ [Covid-19 nurses at the frontline](#) (23/03-07/04 2021)
- ✓ [EFN Governance and Impact](#) (15/04/2021 & 14/10/2021 EFN GAs)
- ✓ [European Patients' Rights Day](#) (06/05/2021)
- ✓ [Europe Day](#) (09/05/2021)
- ✓ [International Nurses Day](#) (12/05/2021)
- ✓ [OSHA Campaign](#) (1-7/05/2021)
- ✓ [G20 Global Health Summit](#) (21/05/2021)
- ✓ [OECD Equity in Education](#) (17/09/2021)
- ✓ [HERA](#) (22/09/2021)
- ✓ [World Mental Health Day](#) (10/10/2021)
- ✓ [European Citizen's Prize](#) (09/11/2021)
- ✓ [Antimicrobial Resistance Week](#) (18-24/11/2021)
- ✓ [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) (20-21/11/2021)
- ✓ [Vaccination Campaigns](#) (All over the year)
- ✓ [Final report social media 2021](#) (21/12/2021)



➤ EFN Update

On a regular basis, when significant lobby information is available, the EFN publishes its [Update](#), a newsletter that makes reference to the main information for nurses and the nursing profession within the European Union and to the key issues to influence the European Institutions. These 'Updates' keep the EFN Members and other key EU health alliances informed about the EFN policies, actions and relevant EU initiatives. In 2021, the EFN published 4 Updates: [January](#)-

[February-March-2021](#); [April-May-June 2021](#); [July-August-September 2021](#); [October-November-December 2021](#). All the EFN Updates are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=875

➤ EFN Press Releases

Another approach that the EFN is using to communicate with the EU lobby arena is through its press releases. The [EFN Press Releases](#) provide the EFN members and other key EU health actors, with information on key topics that the EFN believes are important to share, at a crucial moment. These are seen as a good way to reaffirm EFN views/position on a particular topic next to the EU Institutions and the EU stakeholders. In 2021, the EFN published the following press releases: [112th EFN General Assembly - April 2021](#) (April 2021); [International Nurses Day 2021 - Building a Resilient EU Nursing Workforce](#) (May 2021); [Investing in a Resilient Nursing Workforce Equates to Future Preparedness](#) (May 2021); [113th EFN General Assembly - October 2021](#) (October 2021). All the EFN Press Releases are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=882

➤ EFN Policy Statements and Position Papers

The [EFN Policy Statements and Position Papers](#), highlighting the EFN members views on specific issues, and approved by the EFN General Assembly, are crucial for the EFN's lobby work next to the different EU Institutions and EU Stakeholders, and to support the EFN Members in their daily lobby work at national and EU level. In 2021, the EFN members adopted the [EFN Policy Statement on Nurses Mentorship](#) (April 2021); [EFN Position Statement on Violence and Harassment Against Nurses](#) (April 2021); [EFN Position Statement on Nurses Co-Designing Artificial Intelligence Tools](#) (April 2021). All the EFN Policy Statements and Position Papers are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=833

➤ EFN inputs to the European Commission Consultation Processes

In 2021, the EFN inputs to the European Commission Consultation processes related to: [European health data space inception impact assessment](#) (January 2021); [EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work](#) (January 2021); [European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority \(HERA\) Roadmap](#) (February 2021); [Green Paper on Ageing](#) (April 2021); [European Health Data Space \(EHDS\)](#) (May 2021); [European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority \(HERA\)](#) (May 2021); [Evaluation of Patient Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare](#) (May 2021); [Healthcare expenditure and financing – EU statistics](#) (May 2021); [Education for environmental sustainability](#) (July 2021). All the EFN contributions to the EU and WHO Europe consultation processes are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=873

➤ EFN Reports

The EFN is for long developing reports that supports its lobby work, using all the information available on a topic, including through EFN members approved position papers, General Assembly discussions and approved content, using data collection on the spot and its 'Tour de Table' during its General Assemblies, as a key policy support mechanism to gather data and enable the exchange of best practices among its membership. The policy reports developed from this intelligence gathering are a vital source of factual, comparative data and insights into health and social care in the European Union and Europe. In 2021, the EFN developed several reports on: [EFN Report on gender and profession-based violence against nurses](#) (September 2021). All the EFN reports are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=2198

➤ EFN Articles

Publishing [articles](#) is a good way for the EFN to increase the visibility of nurses and the nursing profession at European level, to strengthen the EFN's position on a range of key policy issues, and to increase the impact of the EFN messages and their potential influence on the policy design. In 2021, the EFN published several articles: [Leveraging the trust of nurses to advance a digital agenda in Europe: a critical review of health policy literature](#) (published in the new EU "Open Research Europe" platform, May 2021); [Supporting Nurses on the Frontline](#) (May 2021); [The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nurses in Europe](#) (May 2021); [Digital transformation of healthcare for the patient](#) (October 2021); [Health workers shortages](#) (In French – November 2021). All the EFN articles are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=2258

➤ EFN Briefing Notes

The [EFN Briefing Notes](#), available only to the EFN members via email and/or the members' section of EFN Website, provide specific information on key lobby topics that may influence the EFN members' national policies and daily lobby work. In 2021, the EFN published some Briefing Notes on key items: EU Pact for Skills - Digital Skills for nurses -

European Commission Roundtable (*February 2021*); Report on European Commission Roundtable on EU Pact for Skills (*February 2021*); National Consultation on EU Budget Allocation (*February 2021*); More Women, More Nurses in Politics (*March 2021*); Future of Europe (*September 2021*); European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) (*September 2021*); Launch of WHO Nursing and Midwifery Euro Roadmap (*December 2021*). All the EFN Briefing Note are available only to the EFN Members at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=2295. Next to these EFN Briefing Notes, the EFN Members also received regular [ENRF Briefing Notes](#) on key topics for nursing research that can also be of interest to them.

VIII. CONCLUSION

For almost two years now, nurses have been more than ever before in a very complex and challenging timing. COVID-19 has disrupted society in its entirety, but of all the different sectors one that remained working day and night, with incredible shifts and no breaks or holiday, were the nurses, who through their relentless commitment, expertise, professionalism, bravery, care for our most vulnerable, have and continue preserving millions of lives daily and providing comfort and dignified care at end of life. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the added value of the nursing workforce to the European healthcare ecosystems: working at the frontline of care, at the bedside with the patient, and providing the evidence that nurses' competencies are central to the functioning of healthcare systems in the EU. Nurses play a fundamental and indispensable role in the provision of safe and quality healthcare.

With the very good steps already achieved, we need for sure to build further on all the work done and outcomes reached so far, building on the partnership with the EU leaders and policymakers, and knowing that a lot is happening at EU level, namely on Digitalisation, Workforce and Education. The nurses' voice is key to change for the better, to make sure that the EU institutions include health in all policies to tackle the EU, European and global challenges, and enhance nurses' ability to shape and deliver effective and efficient EU policies that impact positively on the EU citizens.

Knowing that nurses are natural healthcare innovators being at the frontline of care, ready to upscale new digital health tools for the benefit of patients, they can contribute to address three key elements of the current transformation of health ecosystems: building trust, promoting user-centre innovation and ensuring an appropriate use of data to enable technology.

Investing in nursing is an investment in the health of the EU citizens and the EU health system!

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) was established in 1971. The EFN represents over 36 National Nurses Associations and its work has an effect on the daily work of 3 million nurses throughout the European Union and 6 million in Europe. The EFN is the independent voice of the nursing profession and its mission is to strengthen the status and practice of the profession of nursing for the benefit of the health of the citizens and the interests of nurses in the EU and Europe.

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