



European Federation of Nurses
Associations

EFN UPDATE

October - November - December 2023

President's Message



Dear EFN Members and Colleagues,
Welcome to the Autumn edition of the EFN Update.

It is my honour and privilege to serve you, our National Nursing Associations, as your newly elected EFN President for the 2 years' term 2023-2025. With our collective efforts and your support, I will represent our members, the nurses of Europe, in the political arena of Europe and to the healthcare stakeholders that

are formatting the decisions for health and Nursing in Europe. By strong representation of Nursing in Europe we can shape the future of our profession and of health in Europe and worldwide.

I would like to highlight the excellent work of my predecessor Ms Elizabeth Adams who has been serving EFN as President with zeal and dedication and has been an inspiration for all. Her efforts in all her years of service have placed EFN in a leading position and in the centre of the decision-making processes in relation to nursing and health in general.

The work that has already been done will continue with the same efforts and the collaborations that have been established with health care and other nursing organisations will be enhanced e.g., ICN, ENSA, EFNNMA, WHO. Also, the involvement with EU projects and the collaboration with stakeholders that are involved with European projects will continue and enhanced. The EFN, together with EFNNMA and WHO Europe region, continued the webinars on WHO Nursing Roadmap with last one held on 27 September 2023, concentrating on nursing migration. Also, the efforts will continue together with ICN to change ILOs' definition and categorization of nursing.

The end of the COVID-19 pandemic has left the healthcare services in Europe in critical condition and in particular the nursing profession due to severe nursing shortages, exacerbation of violence against nurses and worsening working conditions. All the above jeopardise nurses' safety, wellbeing, and accountability at the workplace. Moreover, the demand for financial constraints in healthcare services led to unfavourable for the nurses' decisions taken by politicians and health care stakeholders e.g., low salaries, cut of nursing positions, demand for healthcare personnel with minimal educational level replacing nurses' posts. Consequently, the quality of the health care services offered to the people and to the patients are placed at risk.

Nursing shortages worldwide has spread a wide process of recruitment from other countries leading to unethical processes. In dealing with the issues, stakeholders began an effort to lower the length of nursing education and reduce the competencies nurses need to practice safely and qualitatively. These efforts will have consequent effects into the future of the nursing profession and of the nursing education. Furthermore, working conditions despite being at their worst ever state will deteriorate, further jeopardizing our autonomy and our status within the healthcare services and society. We must join our forces to find solutions that are feasible, that retain our level of education and that can help deal with the shortage crisis.

Recently, the EFN participated in a study on the implementation of the [European Beating Cancer Plan](#) that has been in place since 2021. The EFN stressed the problems of the implementation of the strategy due to consequent effects of the recent covid pandemic to healthcare services and to people's lives. The Nursing issues like shortages, underpayment, concentration to dealing with other

healthcare issues as priority instead of cancer prevention, detection and management, primary health care of less importance for healthcare services.

On behalf of the EFN Executive Committee and the EFN Office I wish you all a successful New Year to come at personal level and for the nursing profession in general.

Aristides Chorattas
EFN President

News from EFN



117th EFN General Assembly, Madrid

The EFN Members met on 19-20 October in Madrid, Spain, to discuss some key EU policy topics, having a huge impact on nurses. One of the central themes the General Assembly was [Advanced Practice Nursing](#) (APN), for which the EFN is undertaking some developments, including a Roadmap, that includes examples on culture, practice and legislation change. Another important point discussed, and for which the EFN members approved an [EFN policy statement](#), is Lifelong Learning (LLL)/Continuous Professional Development (CPD), crucial to the future sustainability of nurses and the nursing profession. From the nursing profession perspective, it is crucial to have high qualified nurses to guarantee the quality of care and patient safety. Safe Staffing levels was also discussed, with an [EFN Policy Statement](#) approved by the EFN members. Taking into account the growing concerns on working conditions and shortage of registered nurses, and the ethical implications of recruiting nurses from non-European countries that also face workforce shortages, the EFN members are urging the EU and national policymakers to take immediate action to prioritise the welfare of nurses and patients alike. Another central theme of our discussion was the current challenge that the health systems face in combating the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), with an [EFN Policy Statement on AMR](#) approved by the members. The European Commission is designing policies within the concept of 'One Health for All, All for One Health', and the revision of the EU's pharmaceutical legislation provides an opportunity that cannot be missed. The EFN therefore calls for legislation that provides responsible incentives for innovation and equitable access to medicines, as well as facilitates prudent use of established antibiotics. The EFN also took the opportunity to collect key data on AMR led by nurses during its Tour de Table. It is important for EFN to identify best practices on AMR, next to the needs for policy initiatives based on developments led by nurses at national level and foster a common understanding and promote the implementation of the One Health concept. The EFN members also approved a [statement](#) on the conflict Israel-Gaza, as once again, the healthcare professionals, and the nurses in particular, are put at stake. Finally, the EFN members elected 4 members of the Executive Committee, for a 2-year mandate (2023-2025), including a new EFN President: Aristides Chorattas from the Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, and former Vice-President; Yves Mengal, from the Fédération Nationale des Infirmières de Belgique (FNIB), Belgium, re-elected as Treasurer; and two Executive Committee members: Dorthe Boe Danbjorg, from the Danish Nurses' Organization, Denmark, and Tony Fitzpatrick, from the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, Ireland.

Meeting with DG GROW

EFN (nurses), CPME (doctors) and PGEU (pharmacists) met the European Commission DG GROW to discuss on the Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications ([Directive 2013/55/EU](#)), Annex V, shortage of healthcare professionals in the EU, including the downward pressure on the minimum training duration in the EU Member States, as Governments, Ministers of Health, believe the shortage of healthcare professionals can be solved by lowering down their qualifications and duration, and reskilling and upskilling. The EFN counts on the European Commission to support and protect frontline nurses.



WHO Leadership Dialogue on Global Health Diplomacy



The EFN was invited to take part to the high-level networking meeting organised by WHO, in Brussels, on the occasion of the launch of the WHO Leadership Dialogue on [Global Health Diplomacy](#) flagship initiative in the area of health diplomacy. This event brought together key policy actors as diplomats, academic experts, EU officials, public health specialists and civil society representatives to exchange views on how to build a healthier and fairer future. This was also a good opportunity for the Belgium EU Presidency to highlight its political priorities, with health as a top priority in its agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the gaps in the global health security architecture. It is now crucial to break silos and take a holistic approach to health and wellbeing at the global level. This implies that health should be included in all policies. As such, it is key to strengthen cooperation between the different actors, the need to increase and strengthen dialogue with key stakeholders at global level. This implies the recognition of the key role of health stakeholders, in particular nurses who [position centrally](#) to strengthen healthcare systems.

From pandemic to permacrisis? Europe's next health care challenge

With the 2024 European elections looming, pivotal health files including the pharmaceutical legislation, European Health Data Space and Substances of Human Origin are racing to be wrapped up. As the curtain falls on a game-changing few years in European health policy making, it's time for a stocktake of where we are now and how to tackle the next challenge: Europe's health care permacrisis. POLITICO is organising a [healthcare summit](#), bringing together key stakeholders, for a series of interviews and panel discussions, including EFN invited as keynote speaker in the session "Caring for the carers: Has Europe let its health workforce down?". The event is taking place on 24-25 October 2023, in Brussels and [Online](#).



News from the EU

State of Union address 2023



As every year, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, gave her [State of the Union address](#), taking stock of the situation on what the European Union has achieved in recent years and outlining flagship initiatives the European Commission plans to undertake in the coming year. She focused a lot on the

young generation stressing on the importance to guarantee equal opportunities in order to shape a better future. "It is the moment to

show to the young generation that we can build a continent where you can be who you are, love who you want, and aim as high as you want. A continent reconciled with nature and leading the way on new technologies. A continent that is united in freedom and peace. This is Europe's moment to once again answer the call of history", she said. She also focused on the [nurses' shortage](#), stressing that hospitals are postponing treatment because of lack of nurses, stressing the need to work together on challenges facing the labour market - from skills and labour shortages, to new challenges stemming from AI. Read more [here](#).

Value-Based Healthcare – what does it mean in the EU?

One of the great challenges that the society is facing regards the rising cost of the healthcare systems. Although the EU usually has a very economic approach towards value-driven health ecosystems, it is now crucial to have a long-term strategy for moving from low-value based to high-value based healthcare systems. The nursing profession, as end-user and co-designer, believes that value-based health care is a promising concept, but to have impact at the health system level, it must be applied to the key decision-processes that make up care delivery. To discover more on this topic, read the [EFN Policy Statement on EU recommendations on defining value in value-based healthcare](#) and the [EFN Position Paper on Value-Based Health and Social Ecosystem](#).



European Parliament first report on Mental Health



In the last years, mental health in Europe, affecting 150 million citizens, has been in decline and Covid-19 has contributed to it. The European Institutions have been taking some initiatives on this. To tackle this crisis, the European Commission is putting mental health on par with physical health by introducing 20 flagship initiatives and €1.23 billion in funding from different financial instruments. In June 2023, the European Commission published a [Communication](#) with a comprehensive approach

to mental health, setting out various initiatives to alleviate mental health stress and conditions in the EU. On 30 August, MEP Sara Cerdas (Portugal, S&D) presented a [draft initiative report on Mental Health](#) aiming to deal with issues such as prevention, mental health promotion, early diagnosis, fighting stigma, accessibility to care. The report also includes asking for more direct funding channelled into mental health and clearly establishing who the most vulnerable groups are to identify risk factors and protect these groups. On 7 September, the MEPs presented their [amendments](#) to the report. From a nurses' perspective, it is a key topic to take into consideration. Nurses' mental health has been subject to high risks especially during the pandemic. Working conditions and increasingly heavy shifts caused by a lack of nursing staff lead to damage to mental health. It is fundamental to take care of it and to stop the flow of abandonment of the profession.

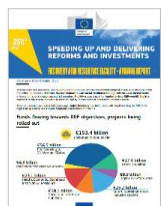
Together for Democracy

Ahead of the 2024 European Elections, the European Parliament launched a new movement "Together.eu" aiming to be the basis of all information and communication ahead of and around the next



[European elections](#) and to connect European citizens who believe in democracy, for sharing new knowledge and learning new skills. The EFN discussed the upcoming European Elections at its Autumn General Assembly, coming up with an EFN Manifesto to be used by the EFN at EU level, and by the EFN members at national level, and make sure to attract the attention of the candidates on health and nurses' policy priorities.

NextGenerationEU: Recovery and Resilience Facility

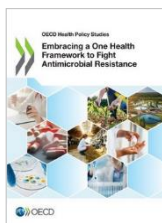


The European Commission adopted in September 2023 its [second annual report](#) on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which shows that the Commission has received 34 payment requests from 21 Member States and disbursed €153.4 billion for the delivery of agreed investments and reforms. The Council has already adopted four revised plans including REPowerEU chapters, and 17 more revised plans are in the Commission's assessment pipeline. To further increase visibility and transparency, the European Commission launched an [online interactive map](#) of RRF-supported projects in each Member State.

Publications

Embracing a One Health Framework to Fight AMR

The OECD published a [new report](#) entitled "Embracing a One Health Framework to Fight Antimicrobial Resistance" that shows that in the absence of stronger One Health action – targeting people, animals, agri-food systems and the environment – AMR levels will remain unacceptably high for at least the next 25 years. This will have a huge consequence on people and will put additional pressure on hospital resources that are already strained from the COVID-19 pandemic, with the cost to health systems and economies that will continue to increase. The report looks at 11 One Health policy interventions and three policy packages that will reduce the impacts of AMR if implemented systematically. AMR is a professional and political challenge, and one of the most current critical concerns of public health, that requires the [engagement of the frontline nurses](#). Although some developments are on the way to tackle the burden of AMR, the nursing workforce needs to be part of the policy designs, making frontline implementation a reality.



Investing in Health Systems Resilience: are we ready for the next health crisis?



As Covid-19 pandemic showed, the healthcare systems resilience is a key element for facing health crisis, and Governments need to urgently adapt their health systems to be ready for the next crisis. The [OECD Report "Ready for the next crisis? Investing in Health System Resilience"](#) reviews the lessons learnt from COVID-19 and applies them to build policy recommendations, focussing on 3 major vulnerabilities exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic: Underprepared; Understaffed; Underinvested in the healthcare staff. The report provides six policy recommendations to improve health system resilience, and calls for investing more in the healthcare workforce, alongside increased spending on prevention and digital infrastructure. As demonstrated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the lack of healthcare staff and nurses, in particular, has put health systems on strain, causing them to malfunction in the delivery of care, overloading nurses and resulting in the nurses leaving the nursing profession. Representing the majority of the healthcare professionals, the [lack of nurses](#) represents a great issue for the resilience of the healthcare systems. It is necessary to invest more in the nursing profession, to improve their working conditions to make the profession more attractive for the young generation. If we want to reach resilient healthcare systems, it is key to invest in nurses!

Defining a collaborative surveillance

WHO published a [collaborative surveillance concept](#) entitled "Defining Collaborative Surveillance" for strengthening the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response, and resilience. This concept paper proposes an ambitious set of capabilities for strengthening evidence for public health decision-making, next to a conceptual model that can be used by the countries for developing surveillance capabilities and address fragmented and insufficient capacities.



Digital Health in the WHO European Region



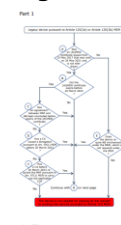
The WHO Regional Office for Europe published a new [report](#) entitled "Digital Health in the WHO European Region: the ongoing journey to commitment and transformation" based on the results of the survey on digital health conducted in 53 Member States of WHO European Region, through the 2022, to understand the evolution of digital health, the infrastructures that supports it, the strengthen and the weakness which obstacle the widespread adoption. The main next steps that emerged from this report are: 1/ Establish effective governance; 2/ Develop robust evaluation guidelines and increase digital health literacy; 3/ Ensure sustainable financing and collaboration; 4/ Address interoperability and standardize health data; 5/ Promote patient-centred care and digital inclusion. The report also includes case examples provided by countries, illustrating a range of digital health applications and practices in various national contexts.

State of the Digital Decade

The European Commission published a [report on the State of the Digital Decade](#), that provides an overview on the progress made towards achieving the digital transformation to empower a more digitally sovereign, resilient, and competitive EU. It includes an assessment of the EU's performance towards Europe's [2030 objectives and targets](#) focusing on four main pillars: digital skills – showing that Member States need to prioritise investments in high quality education and skills, and to foster women's participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) from an early age, digital infrastructure, digitalisation of businesses, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and digitalisation of public services. The report, the first of a series of annual reports, is calling on the Member States for collective action to address the current investment gaps, accelerate digital transformation in Europe and intensify efforts to reach the objectives of the [Digital Decade Policy Programme](#) (DDPP). It also includes recommendations on actions, measures, and policies in areas where progress is insufficient.



Medical Devices Regulation - Article 120 amended by Regulation 2023/607



The European Commission [DG SANTE](#) services in charge of the EU legislation on Medical Devices and In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices published a [flowchart](#) to assist in deciding whether or not a device is covered by the extended regulation (MDR) transitional period. This flowchart will help to define the eligibility, conditions and deadlines for the placing on the market or putting into service of certain devices in accordance with [Article 120 MDR](#). The main aim of the MDR is that the manufacturers produce safe products for the European citizens.

"My Country in a bubble" – Eurostat Tool

[Eurostat](#) launched a new tool called "My country in a bubble" to explore in a fun way the world of statistics and compare the EU Member States and EFTA countries for about 50 indicators - from people, to economy and environment. Clicking on the theme you are interested in will make it appear the related topics and the bubble will move on the screen to their position in the plot area. For more information, click [here](#).



Nurses' Voices Speaker Series

CIFAL York, in partnership with the Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH), is hosting a monthly *Nurses' Voices Speaker Series*. For more information & to register, click [here](#).

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