



European Federation of Nurses
Associations

EFN UPDATE

January - February - March 2024

President's Message



Dear EFN Members and Colleagues,

The developments in the health care sector as well as the challenges that society is facing have increased the demands on the nursing staff. Therefore, the European Commission [Recommendation](#) on the recognition of qualifications of third country nationals (November 2023) is very important for all nurses of Europe, as it outlines concrete measures and targets for Member States to streamline skills recognition for non-EU nationals.

The EFN made it clear that facilitating the recognition of qualifications and validation of skills gained in non-EU countries has to be in line with the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), defining who is entitled to practice the nursing profession in the EU Member States, as minimum requirements, especially the 4600 hours and the article 31 with 8 competencies. The EFN supports the right to migration, but the potential consequence of brain drain must be addressed. Therefore, the initiative from the European Commission must align with the WHO [Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel](#) to prevent targeted recruitment from fragile healthcare systems.

The implementation of the regulation of the nursing profession in the European Union has contributed positively to the improvement of the nursing care levels in Europe, having an important impact to the safeguarding and upgrading of the nursing profession, as well as to the achievement of highest quality nursing care through the competences needed to become a nurse in the EU. The upgrading of the nursing profession through university education, [implementing Directive 2013/55/EU](#) and the implementation of the [Advanced Practice Nurse](#) (APN) role, impose the legislative regulation of nursing so that nurses themselves, through their professional bodies, and the state can exercise control over the quality of the nursing education and consequently of the nursing practice throughout each EU Member State of the EU.

Furthermore, the Directive 2013/55/EU framework helps in the better planning of the nursing workforce in the EU and as such will help for a better planning for the management of health crises which impose an increase pressure on the health care services.

The EFN welcomes the new European Commission [Skills and Talent Mobility package](#), under the [2023 European Year of Skills](#), that includes as key proposal the Commission Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals, with a clear recognition of the Directive 2013/55/EU as attracting qualified nurses from non-EU countries to help address the nursing shortages. This must be done without compromising skills and qualification and be sensitive to the risk of brain-drain. Enhanced collaboration with third countries will ensure swift and effective information sharing, supporting high levels of trust.

Finally, I want to thank you for your commitment and hard work over the past year and I look forward to working with you in 2024.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful holiday season and happiness for the New Year.

With my warmest regards,

Dr Aristides Chorattas
EFN President

News from EFN

Belgium EU Presidency

On 1st January 2024, Belgium will take over from Spain the [Presidency of the Council of the EU](#) for 6 months. The Belgian presidency will work towards better protecting European citizens, strengthening cooperation, and preparing for the future. With the European Parliament elections taking place in June 2024, the Belgium EU Presidency will have the challenge to finalise negotiations with the European Parliament on ongoing legislative files and support the transition of the new institutional cycle.



Having health high on its agenda, namely workforce and AMR (*with a high-level meeting on AMR foreseen on 6-8 May 2024*) – two key points high on EFN policy agenda, this will be a key opportunity to follow on the Presidency developments on these topics, and make sure nurses' voice are included in it. Next to that the Belgium EU presidency will prioritize the pandemic treaty and the international health regulations and the adoption of the council conclusions on the future on the European Health Union.

This comes at a crucial moment! The end of the COVID-19 pandemic has left the healthcare services all over 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 putting at risk nurses' safety, wellbeing, accountability at the workplace, as well as patient safety and quality of care.

One Health Approach on AMR



Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is not a "silent" enemy anymore. It is a critical global problem that affects human, environmental, and animal health. As such it is key to look at it from different disciplines to frame it within the [One Health approach](#). However, developing and implementing solutions within the One Health approach is a complex undertaking as it requires a high level of cooperation, communication and coordination between disciplines and treatment paths. However, nurses have a proven track record of positively impacting on reducing

antimicrobial resistance as part of their role in prescribing medicines alongside with their skills as advanced practice nurses (APNs). And cross-sectoral education and cooperation between nurses, pharmacists, doctors, veterinarians, dentists, and other healthcare professionals, in line with the One Health approach, is particularly important in the context of antimicrobial resistance. Aiming to bring the nurses' voice on this at the EU level, the EFN members approved at the EFN General Assembly, in October 2023, an EFN Policy Statement on [AMR One Health Approach](#).

Following closely this issue at EU level, the EFN participated in the [One Health Conference 2023](#) that focused on the future of 'One Health' in Europe. To establish a 'One Health' approach, the role of nurses is key. As the closest healthcare professionals to patients, they represent the people patients trust the most and, thus, play a fundamental role in directing them towards better and healthier choices. The EFN truly believes that to achieve better results it needs to be more pragmatic and more action oriented, taking into account nurses' voice.





Next to that, following closely the work done on AMR in [ECDC](#), the EFN participated in the [European Antibiotic Awareness Day \(EAAD\) 2023](#) that focused on antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial

consumption situation in a [One Health perspective](#), the overall cost of inaction, and the initiatives that are taking place to tackle [AMR](#). The event showed that the [One Health approach](#) plays a key role in collecting antimicrobial [consumption data](#) to guide policy and research, in supporting the development of new medicines and treatment approaches and in promoting responsible use of antibiotics. To take it to the next level, the ECDC is urging to take actions namely on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents (only when needed, correct dose, correct dose intervals, correct duration), on infection prevention and control (hand hygiene, screening for carriage, isolation of patients, environmental cleaning, etc.), on new antimicrobial agents (as novel mechanism of action), and on vaccination, surveillance and monitoring, new diagnostic tests, research and development. The [role of nurses](#) and all healthcare professionals in [combating AMR](#) is key for patients' safety and for delivering high quality care. Spreading the right knowledge on the risks related to AMR is an essential step forward for building a better future and, to do so, nurses can be the best ally.

European Parliament vote on EHDS

The European Parliament positive vote on the [European Health Data Space \(EHDS\) report](#), adopted with a very large majority (516 votes in favour) represents a great step forward to improve efficiency on provision of care and hopefully better health outcomes, and to empower citizens/patients to control their personal healthcare data and facilitate secure sharing with healthcare professionals and research. [EHDS](#) represents one of the central building blocks of a strong European Health Union and could change the EU healthcare ecosystems, allowing individuals to check and use their health data in their own country or in other Member States, fostering the development of a interoperable EHR and digital healthcare ecosystem (cf. EFN involvement in the EU project [Smart4Health](#) that is now finished). Therefore, the EHDS represents a great opportunity for [nurses](#) and for all the healthcare professionals to have easier access to the health data of their patients, ensuring protection, high-quality care, and research. The EFN, CPME, PGEU and CED [joint statement](#) sent to the MEPs on EHDS draft report before the final vote, was urging them to take the healthcare professionals' concerns into consideration, expressing their regret regarding the exclusion of the wording on ensuring that healthcare practices that qualify as small enterprises are exempted from the secondary data obligations in the EHDS. The EFN will follow-up on this development.



International Day - Elimination of Violence against Women

As every year, 25 November marks the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), with violence against women and girls remaining one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. From a nurses' perspective, mostly women, this is a [major concern](#). Nurses are at the frontline of [addressing many forms of violence](#), as verbal, emotional or physical (including sexual) violence at their workplace. Violence against nurses has reached epidemic proportions, with anecdotal evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic pointing to a sharp increase across countries in Europe. It is imperative that nurses are protected and supported, through the development of policies, initiatives, and legislation at national and European level. For the EFN, that follows this very closely, the [Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), and the [Council of Europe Istanbul Convention](#) are key legislation. The



EFN having [collected data on it](#), and having a [clear position](#), is making sure the nurses' voice is heard at EU level. Violence against nurses/women are not new and is totally unacceptable, as it has an enormous negative impact on their psychological and physical well-being and on their job motivation, with nurses' leaving the profession. This puts the quality of care and patients' safety at risk. Therefore, it is time to act!

In this context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women WHO launched a new [e-learning programme](#) for frontline healthcare providers and health managers, aiming to build knowledge and skills to care for and support women experiencing any forms of violence.

Safe and healthy work in the Digital Age 2023-2025 – EFN in partnership with OSHA!

As Official Campaign Partner of the [Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025](#), the EFN continues to work closely to [OSHA](#), the European Information Agency for Occupational Safety and Health. This new campaign is aiming to ensure a human-centred approach to managing digital technologies in the workplace. For years, the EFN has been working to promote and protect nurses and the nursing profession and this [European Week for Safety and Health at work](#) (done on EFN social media & Website) represented a window opportunity to shed the light on the importance of building safe workplaces. Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system. Protecting them by creating safe and healthy workplaces, means creating a better environment for patients as well: safer healthcare professionals mean better health care!



Publications

OECD Skills Outlook 2023



Skills are vital for building resilient economies and societies. The [OECD Skills Outlook 2023](#) highlights the importance of supporting individuals in acquiring a wide range of skills, at varying levels of proficiency, to promote economic and social resilience, and the need for policymakers to monitor the costs associated with policies aimed at promoting the green and digital transition, and it affects inequalities. The report finally stresses that training opportunities that respond to emerging labour market needs and efforts to facilitate their uptake can promote a just and inclusive green and digital transition.

Our best wishes for 2024!



As we come to the end of 2023, the EFN wishes you and your families a wonderful holiday season and hope the New Year will bring you all happiness, health and success.

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