



Activity Report

European Federation of Nurses' Associations
Working Year 2024



Table of Contents

Abbreviations p. 3

Executive Summary p. 5

Foreword p. 9

I. EFN Key Lobby Priorities p. 10

II. EU Projects p. 27

III. Building Alliances p. 36

IV. EFN Data Collection p. 39

V. EFN Governance p. 40

VI. Communication p. 44

VII. Conclusion p. 48

Abbreviations

- **AI** Artificial Intelligence
- **AMR** Antimicrobial Resistance
- **APN** Advanced Practice Nurse
- **BeWell** (EU Project) BluePrint alliance for a future health workforce strategy on digital and green skills
- **CNO(s)** Chief Nursing Officer(s)
- **CPD** Continuous Professional Development
- **CPME** Standing Committee of European Doctors
- **DG CNECT** European Commission Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
- **DG CLIMA** European Commission Directorate General for Climate Action
- **DG GROW** European Commission Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
- **DG EMPL** European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- **DG HOME** European Commission Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
- **DG SANTE** European Commission Directorate General for Health and Food Safety
- **Directive 2013/55/EU** 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
- **EFNNMA** European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations
- **EHDS** European Health Data Space
- **EMPL** European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
- **ENSA** European Early Career Nurses and Nursing Students' Association
- **ENVI** European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
- **EU** European Union
- **FEMM** European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- **HCP** Healthcare Professional
- **HERA** European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority
- **HOPE** European Hospital and Healthcare Federation
- **ICN** International Council of Nurses
- **ICUData4EU** (EU Project) Federated European Infrastructure for intensive care units' (ICU) data
- **IMCO** European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

- **KEEPCARING** (EU Project) Future proofing health and care systems, safeguarding healthcare professionals in hospital settings
- **LLL** Lifelong Learning
- **MEP(s)** Member(s) of the European Parliament
- **MOOC** Massive Open Online Course
- **NNA(s)** National Nurses Association(s)
- **NGO(s)** Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
- **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
- **SANT** European Parliament Subcommittee on Public Health
- **SOLP** EFN Strategic & Operational Lobby Plan
- **SPI-DDH** WHO Strategic Partners' Initiative for Data and Digital Health
- **SSL** Safe Staffing Levels
- **WHO** World Health Organization
- **WHO-CCHWF** World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre on Health Workforce
- **WHO RC** World Health Organization Regional Committee for Europe
- **WP(s)** Work Package(s)

Executive Summary

2024 was another difficult year for the European nursing workforce, with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing exodus of frontline nurses away from the nursing profession. As policymakers continue to underfund and deprioritise healthcare investments and reforms, the massive nursing shortages persist, while violence and harassment against nurses continue to increase, forcing frontline nurses to work in unacceptable working conditions. Despite this, the demand for healthcare personnel and healthcare services continues to increase, with the ageing population and rising chronic multi-morbidity. If these trends persist, European health systems will reach a point of non-return, and the safety of the nurses and patients alike will not be guaranteed any longer.

While nursing shortages are a worldwide phenomenon, some EU Member States are deploying unethical recruitment practices “robbing Peter to pay Paul”. As a short-term solution, this phenomenon undermines the long-term self-sustainability of the health systems of the destination countries, and damages the resilience of the often already fragile health systems of the source countries, undermining international efforts towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In addition to this, several EU Member States are also attempting to tackle the shortages by lowering the education and competencies of nurses, in a breach of the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), leading to more infringement procedures from the European Commission towards the Member States, and to a reduction in the safety and quality of care.

As a result, the working conditions will only continue to deteriorate, further worsening nurses’ recognition and status in society and in the hierarchy of healthcare organisational structures. Therefore, we must continue to work towards solutions to the shortages that can be easily implemented, that improve the retention of nurses and the attractiveness of the nursing profession to new recruits, while maintaining the highest levels of education. This is what the EFN and its members have been lobbying on over the past years and years to come. The work done so far on key EFN policy agenda topics linked to Education, Workforce, Patient Safety and Quality of Care - in line with the [EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#), will be taken forward as will the collaborations that have been established with European healthcare and health professional organisations.

In 2024, the EFN followed closely the developments of the [Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU Ministers](#), whose mandate ran between 1st January and 30 July 2024, and which put healthcare and the health workforce high on its political agenda. In particular, the EFN followed the work on two key Council Conclusions positively impacting the EU nursing workforce: the [Council Conclusions on the Future of the European Health Union: a Europe that cares, prepares, and protects](#) and the [Council Conclusions on Social Investments and Reforms for Resilient Economies](#).

Another key development in 2024 for the EFN was the EU elections and the set of the new European Commission and European Parliament. For the EFN, and the EU nurses, this was a key moment to have health kept as a key priority in the European Commission and European Parliament policy agenda. The [EFN manifesto](#) provided some key recommendations for the candidates, that the EFN and its members used to raise awareness on the nurses’ key concerns and priorities. As a follow-up of the June 2024 EU elections, the EFN met several MEPs and European Commission DGs representatives to discuss the EFN priorities and ensure that health and nurses are kept high in their political agenda. The EFN will continue to lobby the EU institutions in 2025, taking the opportunity of this new 5-year mandate to make change happen.

In terms of **Education**, in 2024 the EFN continued to focus on the EU-Directive 2013/55/EU sets the minimal education requirements to become a registered nurse. In addition, it emphasises the high priority of lifelong learning/continuous professional development. Moreover, with the [Commission Delegated Directive EU\) 2024/782](#) of 4 March 2024 amending Annex V to the [EU Directive 2005/36/EC](#), it is also now mandatory to include digital skills for nurses into nursing education curricula. Therefore, it is key to improve the access to professional development for nursing professionals in order to maintain high quality and safe standards of patient care.

Next to this, the EFN continued to support the development of the nursing profession linked to patient needs and care demands in line with the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), the [EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1](#), and the EFN Working Group on [Advanced Practice Nurse \(APN\)](#), finalising the APN Work Plan 2024-26 and the [APN Roadmap](#). This work will continue in 2025. Furthermore, the EFN supports the need to invest in education and skills as essential to improve and sustain the quality of nursing care, which will positively impact patients’ safety. As such, the EFN followed in 2024 the EU developments on lifelong learning/continuous professional development, with an [EFN Policy Statement on Transferring CPD Credits across the EU - Recognition of hours and credits](#) (October 2024) approved by the EFN members at the EFN October 2024 General Assembly.

Furthermore, high quality clinical education is paramount to the development of a competent workforce of nurses able to deliver safe patient care. In this context, nurse student mentorship is key. Having this topic high on its policy agenda, the EFN has been following this topic very closely for many years, namely by attending key EU events on this topic, or through EU projects. In 2024, the EFN took this development a step further by collected data, through EFN April 2024 General Assembly Tour de Table on newly registered nurses not practicing or leaving the profession after graduation, [which shows](#) that mentorship is important for a student to stay in the nursing profession after graduating. Next this, the EFN is involved in an EU project led by WHO '[Nursing Action](#)', aiming to address nursing shortages by collecting EFN Members' best practices on recruitment and retention of nurses. One of the EFN tasks in this project is to develop a Policy Brief on Nursing Students Mentorship, based on the input of the EFN Members, through a survey, and an extensive literature review done by EFN. Since quality mentorship has a significant impact on the future nursing student's careers, it is a key for the EFN to continue supporting this development and make sure that the EU takes into account the nurses' views when developing EU policies on mentorship.

With regards to **Workforce**, the EFN has long been calling on the EU Institutions and the Member States to urgently and adequately address the serious registered nurses' shortages. Post COVID-19, the European Nursing Workforce has been extremely harmed, as it had to face and continues to face unsafe working conditions and unfair salaries that do not match their lifesaving responsibilities. This is pushing them to either move from full-time jobs to part-time jobs, or to leave the nursing profession, some of them without even waiting for their official retirement date, and for others to look for jobs with better pay and better working conditions.

As such, in 2024 the EFN has continued to call on the EU institutions and the Member States to act swiftly and concretely in order to tackle this serious crisis! To inform policymakers on the necessity of investing concretely on EU nursing workforce development building, the EFN has published in 2024 the article: "[The Ticking Time Bomb in the European Union Has Exploded: The Importance of European Council Recommendations on the Healthcare Workforce](#)" (April 2024). Furthermore, in the April 2024 General Assembly, the EFN members discussed and approved the EFN [Policy Statement on EU Nursing Workforce within a Global Safe Staffing Level Context](#) (April 2024), calling on safe nurse staffing as an incentive to attract nurses, aiding recruitment and retention, and reducing the reliance on unethical recruitment practices, and on enhancing the role played by NNAs, including by learning from non-EU examples which effectively developed Safe Staffing Levels (SSL). This was further explored in the [EFN Policy Statement on Ethical Recruitment and Empowering Domestic Nursing Workforce Development](#) (October 2024), discussed and approved by the EFN Members in the October General Assembly in Poland, which called on respecting and fully implementing the [WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel](#) and improving the transparency of bilateral agreements between Destination and Source countries.

Furthermore, **violence against women/nurses** continues to be a top priority for the EFN. In 2024, the EFN continued to raise attention towards the struggle of nurses, who are mostly women. As frontline workers, they work in a very complex and challenging, high-pressure environment, where they provide life-saving patient care. Despite this, many nurses are victims of frequent violence and harassment, including verbal, emotional, and physical (including sexual). This greatly contributes to further damaging the mental and physical well-being of nurses, pushing them to leave the profession. The situation has only worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic. Having it high on its political agenda, the EFN closely monitored the development and final approval of the [Directive on Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#). The Directive is the first comprehensive legal instrument at EU level to tackle violence against women across the EU, both offline and online, and it is greatly welcomed by the EFN as a first step to tackle gender based violence.

Another key point for the EFN members in 2024 was the raised concerns on unethical international recruitment. practices, particularly from countries like Nepal, India, etc. Believing on the importance of influencing politicians to address nursing recruitment and retention issues on a national level, and taking into account that evidence shows that high-income countries cannot rely on international recruitment to solve national nursing shortage, the EFN followed very closely this topic in 2024. The EFN members approved in October 2024 an [EFN Policy Statement on Ethical Recruitment and Empowering Domestic Nursing Workforce Development](#), which calls for developing a resilient EU domestic nursing workforce and on respecting and fully implementing the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health In Personnel. Next to that, and to make sure the EU institutions take this seriously and support the nurses in this key issue, the EFN met with some EU representatives and made it clear that nurses recruited internationally must [comply with the qualifications requirements of the Directive 2013/55/EU](#), and with the [WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health In Personnel](#).

As regards **patient safety and quality of care**, the EFN continued in 2024 to follow and lobby some key topics, as:

↳ **Vaccination**, through the [Coalition for Vaccination](#), of which the EFN is a co-chair. The Coalition for Vaccination brings together European associations of healthcare workers, and relevant students' associations in the field, and aims to support the delivery of accurate information to the public, through key [meetings](#), [publications](#), [joint statements](#), or advocacy campaigns such as the **WHO Europe Immunisation Week Campaign**, that took place from 21 to 29 April 2024, through the co-chairs' social media channels as in the previous years.

↳ **Digitalisation**, with the official adoption by the EU Institutions of the [AI Act](#) and [European Health Data Space](#) (EHDS) directive, and the beginning of the implementation phase. Continuing to follow on these developments at EU level, the EFN continued to be part in 2024 of the [eHealth Stakeholder Group](#) that provides advice and expertise to the European Commission. The EFN continues to provide the perspective of nurses, ensuring co-creation by end-users of digital health legislation and tools that will impact the daily work of frontline nurses and allied healthcare professionals. For the implementation phase of the EHDS, the EFN co-signed a [joint statement](#) in March 2024, together with 35 other EU health stakeholders, with specific recommendations on how to best implement the EHDS.

Moreover, the EFN has been selected as expert partner in the [WHO Strategic Partners' Initiative for Data and Digital Health \(SPI-DDH\)](#), which builds on the digital health action plan for the WHO European Region 2023-2030. As expert partner, the EFN is focusing on one key working group topic "Unlocking more capacity and access to healthcare with digitalisation and responsible AI". Furthermore, at the October General Assembly in Poland, the EFN members have approved an [EFN Policy Statement on improving frontline nurses' time for direct patient care with digitalisation and responsible AI](#) (October 2024), which gives a mandate to the EFN to continue lobbying the EU institutions in 2025 on digital health matters.

The EFN continues to be a key partner in **BeWell EU project, aiming to upskilling and reskilling the nursing workforce**, through the development of a **green and digital skills strategy** for the health ecosystem to be implemented at a local, regional, national, and European level ([Pact for Skills](#)).

↳ **Planetary Health** - in 2024, the EFN was selected as key partner in [DG CLIMA's European Climate Pact Community](#), for its expertise on climate advocacy. Furthermore, the October General Assembly in Poland, adopted a [Policy Statement on Nurses Economic Power and Leadership to Develop Circular Societies](#) (October 2024), which emphasises the role of nurses as change agents who greatly contribute to circular societies through their advocacy activities and through their key contribution to the resilience and stability of health systems. As a top political priority, the EFN will continue to follow these developments in 2025.

Next to these crucial points, the EFN had the opportunity to lobby the EU institutions on other key issues, as:

↳ **HERA Civil Society Forum**, acting as a [contact point](#) between the [European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority](#) (HERA) agency and civil society, and aiming to get regular input, views and opinions. This supports the work of the Advisory Forum and contributes to its informed opinions and conclusions. In this context, in 2024 the EFN continued to follow on the work done by HERA, attending some meetings, and provided input to a public consultation on the future of HERA: [Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority \(HERA\) – review](#) (January 2024), providing key input from a nursing perspective to the EU Commission on the best way forward for DG HERA.

↳ **European Year of Skills**, which came to an end in 2024. To celebrate its achievements and discuss the next steps, the European Commission organised on 30 April 2024, a large-scale conference entitled: "[The European Year of Skills – what comes next?](#)". The EFN has attended this conference, as it is a key stakeholder through the BeWell EU project that is aiming to establish the first Blueprint Alliance for the health ecosystem to create a skills strategy to be implemented at a local, regional, national, and ultimately European level through the Pact for Skills.

↳ **Pact for Skills**, a shared engagement model for skills development in Europe, [aiming](#) to support a fair and resilient recovery and deliver on the ambitions of the [green](#) and [digital](#) transitions and of the [EU Industrial](#) and [SME](#) Strategies, of which the EFN is a key partner of, through the [Large-Scale Partnership for the Health Ecosystem](#) developed under the BeWell Project and coordinated by the European Commission and BeWell. In addition to this, the EFN also attended several key meetings, continuing to bring the nursing perspective with a focus on upskilling, reskilling, and continuing professional development of the nursing workforce.

- ↪ **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**, that the EFN continued to follow closely in 2024. Nurses are [central allies](#) in prevention and are recognised as the most trustful healthcare professionals in disseminating reliable information on [AMR](#). In this context, the EFN continues to be part of the European Commission expert group on [AMR One Health Network](#), as expert, bringing in nurses' expertise to the debate. Moreover, as in previous years, the EFN participated in some key EU meetings all over the year, and took part in the [European Antibiotic Awareness Day](#) held on 18 November, through its social media channels raising awareness on this key policy topic.
- ↪ **Mental Health**, which is a top-political priority for the EFN seen as a serious crisis affecting the health workforce, especially post-COVID-19, pushing frontline nurses to leave the profession. As such, in 2024 the EFN continued its lobbying actions towards the EU institutions, calling on policymakers to target mental health. Moreover, to support nurses' mental health, the EFN is taking part in the EU Project [KeepCaring](#) which started on 1st July 2024. The EFN is also taking part in the EU funded, WHO led [EU Nursing Action project](#). Furthermore, on occasion of World Mental Health Day, the EFN was one of the speakers at the conference co-organised by the Hungarian Presidency of the EU Council and WHO entitled "[Mental Health and the Triple Planetary Crisis: A Call to Action](#)", where the EFN discussed the impact that climate change is having on the mental of frontline nurses.
- ↪ **EU Semester 2024** - The rising cost of healthcare systems is a serious challenge to the continuation of the provision of care in Europe. The [2024 European Semester Country Reports](#), clearly highlighted the rising cost of long-term care due to the ageing of the European population. This situation is compounded by the rising cost of primary care, as governments view healthcare only through the lens of hospital care, instead of investing in prevention and outpatient care, which are more affordable and reduce the degree of reported unmet healthcare needs and preventable mortality. As a possible response to this, value-based healthcare may help cut down costs while improving the quality of care, as it entails the creation of value for patients and citizens. However, for this to function, it is crucial to have a long-term strategy based on high-value health ecosystems.

The EFN is a very trusted EU stakeholder in the EU lobby arena and is seen as key partner in the work with and towards the EU institutions (European Commission, European Parliament and Council). Over the last year, the EFN has been advocating for the promotion of empowered and skilled EU nurses, through participating on key EU projects, EU and EFN members' meetings, European Commission initiatives, alliances building, publishing EFN articles and policy statements, participating on key social media campaigns, etc. that all led to a next step in the nurses' empowerment and leadership. But more needs to be done. More than ever, it is crucial for nurses to engage and proactively influence and contribute to EU health and social policies, in such a difficult period for all. Nurses' engagement in policy design is crucial to ensuring EU policies fit-for-purpose. The next 5 years with the new European Parliament and the new European Commission will be crucial to tackle the needs of the nursing workforce and ensure the resilience of Europe's health systems!

Foreword

Dear EFN Members,
Dear Colleagues,



2024 has been a challenging year for European Nurses. Despite their ambition to care for patients, they are constantly being put in unsafe and ungratifying conditions which leave them no other choice than to leave the nursing profession.

The massive exodus of nurses is leaving the already weakened, post-COVID-19, European healthcare systems in an even more unstable position. While Europe may be Post-COVID-19, the health crisis is far from over: rising chronic-multimorbidity, made worse by the ageing of the European population, increasingly dangerous rates of antimicrobial resistance, paired with conflicts on our borders and political instability, have put Europe in a so-called state of perma-crisis and multi-crisis.

Despite this, the EU and its Member States continue to make cuts to healthcare budgets, forcing nurses and allied healthcare professionals to deal with increased workloads, disproportionate and unattractive remuneration, difficult working conditions, while facing violence, impacting heavily on their mental and physical health and well-being. This is putting frontline nurses in a situation where they do not have the adequate resources to ensure their own safety, the safety of patients, and to provide the levels and quality of care to which they aspire.

This complex set of challenges requires concrete and innovative policies and EU tools, based on the values of equity and accessibility, to foster new solutions that will guarantee the stability and sustainability of health and social care systems with a strong, having highly qualified and motivated domestic nursing workforce at its core. Changes need to happen quickly, otherwise patients' safety and quality of care will be compromised.

2024 began with the Belgian Presidency of the Council (1st January - 30 June), which put health and social policies high in its political agenda, followed by the elections of the new European Parliament and the new College of EU Commissioners, and by the Hungarian Presidency of the Council (1st July - 31 December). Throughout these developments, the EFN and its members tirelessly called on the European Institutions and on the EU Member States to take priority actions towards ensuring the well-being of patients and nurses alike, highlighting the importance of healthcare system reforms. It is key to advance these reforms to avoid the collapse of the European healthcare systems. Furthermore, it is crucial to base these reforms on a "One Health Approach", which is underpinned on the awareness that the health of the people, the environment, and animals is inevitably interlinked.

Therefore, we must continue to develop and foster the cooperation and dialogue between all the relevant stakeholders, each with their key role, including nurses, whose contribution underpins the resilience of healthcare systems. In 2024, the EFN continued to target EU policies on violence against nurses/women, digitalisation, workforce, education, patient safety and quality of care, supporting frontline nurses while ensuring that their expertise and voice is heard by the EU Institutions. And this relentless work is finally showing its results. Policymakers are hearing EFN United Voice!

We really hope you will enjoy reading this EFN Activity Report, that provides an overview of the daily lobby efforts of EFN in 2024. These achievements would not be possible without our National Nursing Associations and frontline nurses' 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 2025.



Dr Aristides Chorattas
EFN President



Dr Paul De Raeve
EFN Secretary General

I. EFN KEY LOBBY PRIORITIES

The EFN continues to dive and inform European policy development and implementation within the framework of the [EFN Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan 2021-2027](#) (SOLP) that is strategically aligned to a number of important European policies and processes including, for example, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)’ 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. In 2024, the EFN continued to build on the achievements of previous years and focused on 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). In addition, the EFN followed closely in 2024 the developments of the Belgian Presidency of the Council 2024 (1st January 2024 - 30 June 2024), and the EU Elections that brought a new European Parliament and a new European Commission for the next 5 years term.

1. BELGIUM PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The [Belgian Presidency of the EU Council](#), whose mandate ran between 1st January and 30 July 2024, and that was the top priority for the EFN in the first half of the year, put healthcare and social policies at the top of their political priorities. This resulted in the development and publication of two key documents, with which the EFN was engaged since the beginning of the drafting process: the [Council Conclusions on the Future of the European Health Union: a Europe that cares, prepares, and protects](#), aiming at the full development of the European Health Union; and the [Council Conclusions on Social Investments and Reforms for Resilient Economies](#), seeking at strengthening Social Europe. These Council Conclusions were the result of both complex negotiations in the EPSCO Council, and several high-level conferences and meetings which the Belgian EU Presidency organised to engage with key EU health stakeholders, including EFN. Below, some of events the EFN has engaged and contributed to:



- [The meeting on the EU Workforce for Health](#), on 26 January 2024, which highlighted that the global and regional demand for health professionals is expected to increase in the coming decades, due to the ageing of the population, epidemiological factors and additional emerging factors. Speaking at the conference, the EFN expressed the crucial need for the EU politicians and policymakers to take immediate action to focus on developing EU legislation to improve recruitment and retention of domestically educated nurses, safe staffing levels, Advanced Practice Nurses (APN), and prioritise the welfare of nurses and patients alike.
- [The Conference on the future of the European Health Union](#), on 27 March 2024, which highlighted topics of key importance for the EFN, such as the shortage of health professionals and crisis preparedness, as well as the future health agenda for Europe, putting the spotlight on the three big themes of the Belgian Presidency on health: “Care”, “Preparedness” and Protection”.
- [The High-Level Conference on Health-related Needs as Drivers for Healthcare Policy and Innovation](#), held on 17-18 April 2024, which aimed to propose a common methodology to identify and assess unmet needs and define priorities in a transparent and evidence-based way.
- [The High-Level conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#), that took place on 15-16 April in La Hulpe, which brought together policymakers, stakeholders and experts to deliberate on the further implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and led to the signing of the [Inter-institutional Declaration on the Future Social Agenda of the EU](#)” which set the priorities of the EU Social Agenda for 2024-2029.

The EFN members were informed on the outcomes of the most important meetings and developments through regular EFN Briefing Notes (only available to the EFN members on the EFN Website ‘Members section’). Information on the Belgium EU Presidency was also shared on EFN Website, through some news on the [Homepage](#).

2. EU ELECTIONS



The EP elections constitute a crucial moment for determining the new representatives of the EU citizens and, as such, establishing the new political priorities that will be carried out over 5 years in the EU. The EFN is very vocal in advocating for health to remain high in the EU political agenda and to be further supported by the new Parliamentary legislature and the European Commission. Within this context, it was crucial for the EFN to have health included among the new MEPs' priorities and enhance nurses' ability to shape and deliver effective and high-quality care to EU citizens. In this context, the EFN developed an [EFN manifesto](#) with key messages/recommendations for the candidates, used by the EFN Members' National Nurses Associations (NNAs) at national level to make their potential national MEPs' candidates aware and sensitive of the united voice for nurses' priorities so that their political programmes would include the nurses' concerns highlighted in the EFN Manifesto, i.e.: Invest in nursing education, Life-long Learning & Continuous Professional Development at European and national level; Ensure optimal wages, fair working conditions and health workforce capacity building; Take national and EU initiatives to stop Violence against Nurses.

As a follow-up of the EU elections, and in preparation of the start of the new legislative term, the EFN met with several newly elected MEPs from [ENVI](#), [SANT](#), [IMCO](#), [FEMM](#), [EMPL](#), as well as with the European Commission representatives from several key DGs, namely [DG GROW](#), [DG SANTE](#), [DG EMPL](#), [DG HOME](#), [DG CLIMA](#), and [DG CNECT](#), to discuss the EFN priorities and ensure that EU nursing workforce would remain a top political priority in their agendas. These meetings demonstrated the strength of the long-running working relationship between EFN and the EU institutions, and in particular the European Commission, which recognises EFN as a key and credible partner in the healthcare policy field. In addition, the European Commission showed its great commitment to continue supporting the nursing workforce, recognising the crucial role that nurses play for the stability and resilience of European healthcare systems.



The EFN will continue building on this to make sure nurses' views are taken into account in the EU debates and developments.

3. EDUCATION

↳ Directive 2013/55/EU, Annexe V

The [Directive 2013/55/EU](#) continues to be high on the EFN policy agenda. In 2024, the EFN continued to follow-up on these developments linked to the education of nurses, including the development of Annexe V, revised by the new [Commission Delegated Directive EU\) 2024/782](#) of 4 March 2024 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the minimum training requirements for the professions of nurse responsible for general care, dental practitioner and pharmacist. This needs now to be transposed by Member States in their national legislation, by March 2026. The EFN will be following this process closely, as the nursing curricula that already need to comply with the Directive 2013/55/EU and specifically the article 31 with 8 competencies, will now also need to comply with the updated Annexe V topics, that places great emphasis on digital skills for nurses in the nursing curricula. Therefore, the publication of the updated annexe V through a Delegated Act, to which the EFN members largely contributed, is more than welcome.

Next to that, the EFN was in close contact with [DG GROW](#) over the year on some key topics, as Mutual Recognition Professional Qualifications, minimum training requirements, Infringement procedures, as well as shortages of nurses, and the impact on patient safety and patient outcomes. It was made clear to DG GROW that shortage of healthcare professionals cannot be solved by lowering down education/training requirements, and that it is crucial to invest in high qualified and motivated frontline healthcare professionals. It is only by investing in the nursing profession that we will make sure to have resilient healthcare systems at EU level.

As a way to support EFN lobby work towards the EU institutions on this crucial topic for the EU nurses, the April 2024 EFN General Assembly approved the [EFN Policy Statement "How to get Nurses' Education more Attractive"](#), calling on the European Institutions and Member States to make nursing education more attractive, in line with the Directive 2013/55/EU, as well as to maintain a strong link between academic education and clinical practice.

In addition, in 2024, the EFN followed and participated in some key EU meetings on the developments concerning the Directive 2013/55/EU, as the meeting organised by CESI, on 22 May 2024 on “Labour shortage in the healthcare sector: Does the 2005 Professional Qualifications Directive need update?”, also attended by the EU Commission’s DG GROW. As one of the keynote speakers, the EFN Secretary General stressed the need to preserve and fully implement the Directive in order to have a highly competent and resilient, domestically educated European Nursing workforce.

➔ **Advanced Practice Nursing (APN)**

In 2024, the EFN continued working towards the EU-wide adoption of [Advanced Practice Nursing \(APN\)](#). Believing that [APN](#) can improve the delivery of positive health outcomes and increase the resilience of European health systems, the EFN is committed to the progression of the nursing profession in response to changing patient needs and increasing care demand, in line with the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#) and the [EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1](#), reviewed in 2023 to include the latest developments of the EFN Working Group on APN.

As a next step in the work done by the EFN Working Group on APN, the EFN General Assembly discussed and approved the EFN APN implementation toolkit, to be used within countries and to reduce variation of advanced nursing practice across Europe, and which includes a model for implementation ; set of principles for national implementation ; and a Roadmap for successful implementation including milestones. Moreover, the work of the EFN Working Group on APN continues with a second pan-European survey of 35 countries’ implementation of APN, building on the first survey conducted in 2021, which allowed to update the [EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1](#).

In light of the development of APN across the EU, the EFN Members approved in the April 2024 EFN General Assembly the [EFN Policy Statement on Nurse Prescribing in the EU](#), inviting the European Institutions and the Member States to harmonise medicines and medical product prescribing for nurses as a priority to address inequalities in the provision of safe, appropriate and effective care throughout Europe. The EFN sees the need for this as international evidence supports the introduction of independent nurse prescribing that effectively maximises nurses critical thinking, complex decision-making, autonomous practice to deliver safe and effective care that positively contributes to enhanced patient health outcomes within their scope of practice.

➔ **Lifelong Learning / Continuous Professional Development**

In 2024, the EFN continued to follow the developments in terms of Lifelong Learning (LLL) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) at the EU level. The European Commission has made it a priority, through the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), the [Pact for Skills](#), and the [European Year of Skills](#) (that ended in April 2024), to work with EU Member States to support and reinforce the development of key competencies, such as green and digital skills, and basic skills for all, from an early age and throughout life. From a nursing perspective, the EFN [supports](#) the need to invest in education and skills as [essential](#) to sustain a high level of quality in nursing and care, since this will have a positive impact on patients’ safety and health outcomes.

The April 2024 EFN General Assembly discussed the difficulties faced by nurses in transferring CPD Credits from one EU country to another. While the EU Directive 2013/55/EU, sets the minimum training requirements for nurses for the automatic recognition of competencies in the EU, the EU regulatory framework, on its side, is missing a system regulating the recognition of skills and competencies acquired through Continuous Professional Development (CPD)/Lifelong Learning (LLL), which would allow nurses to have their skills and competencies acquired through CPD/LLL to be recognised in all member states. The EFN believes that the EU should develop a framework for the transfer of CPD credits, ensuring the continuous development of the nursing profession. Taking this debate further, the EFN October 2024 General Assembly discussed and approved an [EFN Policy Statement on Transferring CPD Credits across the EU - Recognition of hours and credits](#), calling on the European Institutions and the Member States to develop a common European accreditation system for nursing CPD credits, to be recognised by all the Member States, in line with existing national regulations. The EFN, through the expertise of the National Nurses’ Associations (NNAs), can support the co-design of an EU framework which can be easily implemented, taking into account the needs of frontline nurses.

↳ **Mentorship**

Mentorship during nursing students' clinical training is an important moment in the nursing student education pathway. The EU Directive 2013/55/EU demands that the half of all contact hours of each nursing study programme are done in a mentored clinical environment. Having this topic high on its policy agenda, the EFN has been following this development at EU level.

In 2024, the EFN collected data, through a Tour de Table at the April 2024 EFN General Assembly, on newly registered nurses not practicing or leaving the profession after graduation, on the basis of which the [EFN Report on newly registered nurses leaving the profession](#) (June 2024) was developed. Of particular relevance, it was found that key to ensuring a successful transition from student nurse to registered nurse was the availability of quality mentorships and mentors, that guaranteed good supervision and support to the newly registered nurses (for more information see the section on Data Collection p.39). The EFN Members discussed and approved in the April 2024 General Assembly an [EFN Policy Statement on “Safe orientation process for newly graduated nurses”](#), calling for well-structured and safe introduction for newly graduated nurses as the foundation for a fulfilling and successful career.

On this topic, the EFN joined, in November 2024, a [EU funded project, led by WHO – ‘Nursing Action’](#), which **will concretely address nursing shortages by collecting EFN Members’ best practices** on recruitment and retention of nurses, which can then be implemented in all the EU Member States. To support recruitment strategies, the EFN is currently developing a Policy Brief on Nursing Students Mentorship, based on the input of the EFN Members and a literature review. This Policy Brief will be ready by July 2025.

The EFN will continue to follow on these key topics in 2025.

4. **EU WORKFORCE FOR HEALTH**

↳ **Safe Staffing Levels**

Nursing Safe Staffing Levels (SSL) has been very high in the EFN policy agenda, seen as key to improve the attractiveness of the nursing profession and facilitate retention. As such, building on the [EFN report on Safe Nursing Staffing Levels](#) (September 2023), and on the [EFN Policy Statement on Safe Staffing Levels](#) (October 2023), the EFN has published in 2024 the article: “[The Ticking Time Bomb in the European Union Has Exploded: The Importance of European Council Recommendations on the Healthcare Workforce](#)” (April 2024), which called on the need for concrete investments in the domestic nursing workforce and in nursing education, and in the development of SSL in line with best practice examples from around the world, in the context of the window of opportunity created by the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council, the European Elections, and the new European Commission.

Discussed and approved by the EFN Members in the April 2024 General Assembly, the EFN published a [Policy Statement on EU Nursing Workforce within a Global Safe Staffing Level Context](#) (April 2024), which called on safe nurse staffing as an incentive to attract nurses, aiding recruitment and retention, and reducing the reliance on unethical recruitment practices, and on enhancing the role played by NNAs by learning from non-EU examples which effectively developed SSL. This was further explored in the [EFN Policy Statement on Ethical Recruitment and Empowering Domestic Nursing Workforce Development](#) discussed and approved by the EFN October 2024 General Assembly, in Poland, which calls for developing a resilient EU domestic nursing workforce and on respecting and fully implementing the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health In Personnel.

To take this debate and development further, the EFN met [DG SANTE](#), taking this opportunity to inform the EU representatives on the latest developments at EFN level on this and to present the EFN Report on Safe-Staffing Levels, developed thanks to the expertise of the EFN members. This report was then presented to the [expert group on Health systems performance assessment](#)

(HSPA) - a key forum for Member States to share expertise and best practices in the context of healthcare policy,



which chose Safe-Staffing Levels as one of its key priorities for the year 2024-2025, and as such greatly appreciated the EFN's Members expertise on this key topic and looks forward to take this development further, together with EFN and nurses' expertise.

On this topic, the EFN joined, in November 2024, a [EU funded, WHO-led Nursing Action Project](#), aiming to **address nursing shortages by collecting EFN Members' best practices** on recruitment and retention of nurses, which can then be implemented in all the EU Member States. To support retention strategies, the EFN is currently developing a Policy Brief on Nursing Safe Staffing Levels, building on the EFN Report on Safe Staffing Levels, on new input by the EFN Members, and a literature review. This Policy Brief will be ready by June 2025.

→ **Violence and harassment against nurses**



Violence against women/nurses continues to be an issue of great international concern. In 2024, the EFN continued to follow the developments at EU level on this topic and to raise attention towards the struggle of nurses, who are mostly women. As frontline professionals, they work in a very complex and challenging, high-pressure environment, where they provide life-saving patient care. Despite this, many [nurses are victims](#) of frequent violence and harassment, including verbal, emotional, and physical (including sexual). On the occasion of the international day for violence against women 2024, the EFN [reminded](#) that violence greatly contributes to further damaging the poor mental and physical well-being of nurses, pushing them to leave the profession, and the situation has only worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic. This will also have serious consequences on the quality and accessibility of care for patients.

One of the key developments for the nurses and the nursing profession in 2024, was the approval of the [Directive on Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#), by 522 votes in favour, 27 against, and 72 abstentions. This Directive is the first comprehensive legal instrument at EU level to tackle violence against women across the EU, both offline and online, and it is greatly welcomed by the EFN as a first step towards tackling violence against women and nurses. The EFN is now looking forward to the next developments, at EU and national level, to stop violence against nurses and allied healthcare professionals by ensuring a safe work environment with a [zero-tolerance approach](#) towards violence.

In 2024, the EFN took the opportunity of meetings with the EU representatives, EU stakeholders, etc., including the European Health Summit, on 4-5 November in Brussels, to remind the struggles of frontline nurses, with a majority of women, with the regular violence and harassment to which they are frequently exposed. On the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#), the EFN called on policymakers to take concrete and serious actions to stop violence against nurses and allied healthcare professionals, through More National and European legal actions.

Some key meetings the EFN attended on the topic, as:

- [Congress on Violence against nurses in the EU](#), on 30 September 2024. Invited as keynote speaker, the EFN Secretary General raised the need for nurses to be protected and supported through the development of policies, initiatives, and legislation at the national and European levels. Violence and harassment against nurses are totally unacceptable in 2024.
- [The European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights' Webinar on the EU Gender Based Violence Survey](#), on 29 November 2024, which highlighted that 1 in 3 women in the EU is a victim of gender based violence.



→ **Stopping Unethical International Recruitment**

In 2024, the EFN followed closely the topic of international recruitment of nurses, which several EU Member States are using as a short term, unsustainable solution to the ongoing critical nursing shortages. Given that this issue may have serious implications for the safety and quality of care in the EU, and for the resilience of the healthcare systems of the source countries, the October 2024 EFN General Assembly discussed and approved the [EFN Policy Statement on Ethical Recruitment and Empowering Domestic Nursing Workforce Development](#), which calls

for developing a resilient EU domestic nursing workforce and on respecting and fully implementing the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health In Personnel.

The EFN also met with [DG EMPL](#) and [DG HOME](#), to discuss this topic, who are looking into ways to support EU Member States in recruiting international skilled labour to tackle EU labour shortages, including in the healthcare sector. The EFN made it absolutely clear that when it comes to internationally recruited nurses, they must [comply with the qualifications requirements of the Directive 2013/55/EU](#), and with the [WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health In Personnel](#).

In addition, the EFN attended some key meetings on this topic, including:

- **The Webinar series** (3 webinars) organised by the **EU Commission's DG GROW** on the [Commission Recommendation EU 2023/7700 of 15 November 2023](#) on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals.
- **WHO Webinar Series** (4 webinars) on **"The workforce crisis in healthcare: moving the debate to bridge evidence and policy"** which looked into the drivers of international nursing workforce mobility, and how different countries, both source and destination countries, are managing it.

The EFN members were informed on the ongoing developments on this topic at the EFN General Assemblies, through the EFN [Updates](#), the [EFN Website Homepage](#), and through EFN Briefing Notes (*available only to the EFN members*). The EFN will continue to work on this crucial topic in 2025, and to inform the EFN members on regular basis on its developments.

5. PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY OF CARE

↳ Vaccination

Despite the demonstrated benefits of vaccination as an important prevention tool, vaccines hesitancy is a broadly present trend in Europe, which became even more widespread after the COVID-19 pandemic. This is concerning, since outbreaks of preventable diseases such as Measles have become more frequent in recent years, especially in children and other vulnerable groups and communities. Nurses, as frontline professionals active in the community, and the largest healthcare professional group, play a key role in the efforts towards broad vaccination coverage by educating parents and children, as well as delivering [safe and effective](#) vaccination programmes. Despite this, they often do not receive the recognition which they deserve.

High in its political agenda, in 2024 the EFN continued its work on this topic, namely through its role as co-chair of the [Coalition for Vaccination](#), together with CPME (Doctors) and PGEU (Pharmacists), aiming to support delivering accurate information to the public, combating myths around vaccines and vaccination, and exchanging best practices on vaccination.

In 2024, as in previous years, the EFN participated in the [WHO Europe Immunisation Week Campaign](#), that took place from 21 to 27 April 2024, through the co-chairs' social media channels. This year's campaign coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI). In commemoration, the campaign celebrated the achievements of the EPI which has successfully protected multiple generations over the last 50 years against preventable illnesses. It also emphasised the urgent need to achieve high and equitable vaccination coverage in every community to prevent outbreaks of these diseases now and in the future. Key words: #GetVaccinated #Nursesforvaccination #EPI. **EFN Social Media campaign reached more than 20.000 people and 550 interactions with EFN.**

It is key that the EU countries consider routine vaccination a priority for all age groups, as such it is key to build trust in vaccines by being transparent and up to date with scientific evidence. Nurses have a key role to play in this. We should use their expertise and skills in this. As this is crucial point for the nursing profession, the EFN will continue to follow on this point and contribute to its development in 2025.



→ Digitalisation



Another key political priority for the EFN is digitalisation. At the EU level, 2024 has been a very rich year, with several developments which the EFN followed closely. The [AI Act](#) was adopted by the European Parliament's plenary on 13 March 2024 with 523 votes in favour, 46 against and 49 abstentions, and aims to protect fundamental rights, democracy, the rule of law and environmental sustainability from high-risk AI, while boosting innovation. It thus sets the basis for the development of responsible AI which can support the work of frontline nurses, while ensuring human oversight over high-risk AI tools. As the AI Act entered into force on 1 August and thus entered the implementation phase, it is now key to see whether nurses will be involved in the co-design of these technologies, since the success of AI in Europe largely depends on the end-users' acceptance.

In the context of digitalisation and AI, the EFN has also been selected as expert partner in the WHO [Strategic Partners' Initiative for Data and Digital Health \(SPI-DDH\)](#), which builds on the digital health action plan for the WHO European Region 2023-2030. Discussed and approved by the EFN October 2024 General Assembly in Poland, the EFN has also published a [Policy Statement on improving frontline nurses' time for direct patient care with digitalisation and responsible AI](#) (October 2024) which calls for involving frontline registered nurses as end-users in the co-creation of Digital tools and responsible AI, ensuring their uptake and proper implementation.

Next to this, the EFN has been closely following the development of the [European Health Data Space](#) (EHDS). After complex negotiations, the [EHDS Directive](#) was approved by the European Parliament's plenary on 24 April 2024 with 445 votes in favour, 142 against and 39 abstentions. This bill, which will come into force in Q1/Q2 2025, establishes clear rules to harnesses the potential offered by the safe and secure exchange, use, and re-use of health data, while ensuring full compliance with the EU's high data protection standards. Once the EHDS enters the implementation phase, the EU must take into account the needs of frontline nurses through co-creation, reducing the workload, instead of adding burden. The EFN co-signed a [joint statement](#) in March 2024, together with 35 other EU health stakeholders, on the EHDS's implementation.

The President of the European Commission Ursula Von Der Leyen, in her [Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2024-2029](#), proposed a [European Action Plan on the Cybersecurity of Hospitals and Healthcare Providers](#) to be developed in the first 100 days the new European Commission. The EFN welcomes this EU Action Plan, and will follow this development closely in 2025, bringing in the nurses' views and experience, as hospitals and healthcare providers are increasingly subject to cyber threats, having a huge impact on the daily work of frontline nurses and on the safety and quality of patients' care. In this context, the EFN met with [DG CNECT](#), to ensure that the European Commission will integrate the needs and perspectives of frontline nurses in the development of the Action Plan.

Furthermore, the EFN continues to be part of the [eHealth Stakeholder Group](#), attending the regular meetings, and providing EFN/nurses' views on digital/EHDS key developments and contributing to its crucial discussions, together with the other key EU stakeholders.

Finally, the EFN participated, in 2024, in some key meetings on Digitalisation/EHDS at EU level, as:

- [8th eHealth stakeholders' group plenary meeting](#), where key stakeholders discussed the development Artificial Intelligence in healthcare in Europe, with DG Sante & DG CNECT.
- **"Edelman 2024 Trust and Health Special Report: Lunch Debate"**, on 13 May, where key stakeholders were invited for the launch of the [Trust and Health Special Report 2024](#), and to discuss key legislative developments in the EU including the EHDS directive.
- **"Unlocking Power of Data: Navigating the European Health Data Space from regulation to reality"**, a conference organised by FTI Consulting on 15 May to discuss and outline the implementation of the EHDS Directive with key EU digital health stakeholders, including the EFN.
- [SPI-DDH Launch Conference](#), held in Copenhagen, on 13 June, as one of the key partners working on Digitalisation and AI, specifically in the working group *"Unlocking more capacity and access to healthcare with digitalisation and responsible AI"*.

- **eHealth Stakeholder Group (eHSG) Workshop on Cybersecurity of Healthcare Providers**, on 11 October, where EFN presented the nurses' perspective and priorities in the context of the EU Commission Action Plan on the Cybersecurity of Hospitals and Healthcare Providers. The EFN made it clear that nurses need a Plan B in the possibility of a cyberattack.
- **9th eHealth stakeholder group plenary meeting**, on 26 November 2024, that focused on the future of the EHDS, including its state of play, implementation timeline and actions.
- **EHDS informal stakeholder group meetings** - several informal meetings over the year with regular updates on the ongoing developments on EHDS.

The EFN will continue to follow on these developments with the main idea to engage nurses in the co-design for developing instruments and services which can really facilitate and help frontline nurses in their daily job and as end-users as this is done through the EU project [BeWell](#) on upskilling and reskilling the nursing workforce in this digital context. *For more information on this project, see page 27.*

↳ Planetary Health/Climate

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the close link between the health of our planet and human health. Climate change is part of our daily routine and can no longer be underestimated. Its negative effects are already having disastrous effects on Public Health, with a growing number of catastrophic natural events directly linked to climate change. The [role played by nurses](#) in preparedness and resilience to the negative consequences of climate change is undeniable. Through the care that they provide to patients and through their key role in educating patients and their families on sustainable and climate friendly lifestyle changes, they are pillars of our healthcare systems in the fight against climate change.



In 2024, like in previous years, the EFN has continued to follow on this debate and developments, and its Planetary Health advocacy. This brought the [EFN to be selected](#), in July 2024, as the only healthcare partner in DG CLIMA's [European Climate Pact Community](#), for its expertise and devotion to climate advocacy.

Furthermore, the EFN October 2024 General Assembly, in Poland, discussed and approved the [EFN Policy Statement on Nurses Economic Power and Leadership to Develop Circular Societies](#) which emphasises the role of nurses as change agents who greatly contribute to circular societies through their advocacy activities and through their key contribution to the resilience and stability of health systems. Therefore, EU policy makers need to be aware that societal achievements cannot be achieved without adequate investments in the nursing workforce.

To make sure that the nurses' views are taken into this debate, the EFN met [DG CLIMA](#). This was a good opportunity to discuss EFN actions on Planetary Health, including on the upskilling and reskilling of the EU nursing workforce in Green and Planetary Health skills, as well as to discuss the EFN participation as partner in the European Climate Pact. DG CLIMA showed great appreciation towards the efforts of the EFN Members in preparing European healthcare systems for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The EFN will follow-up on these meetings in 2025.

Finally, in order to keep up with the latest developments on the topic, in 2024 the EFN participated in some key meetings, as:

- **Webinar: “Community Talk on Climate Risk and Resilience”**, held on 30 May, in the context of the European Climate Pact Community, was an occasion for DG CLIMA's to talk about how the EU is preparing itself to strengthen its resilience and adaptation to climate change, and for the EU health ambassadors to share their best practices.
- **Belgian Community Café – “Discover the new workplan”**, held on 30 August 2024, where the Belgian Climate Pact coordinator introduced the new workplan to Belgian Ambassadors and announced upcoming activities.

- **Onboarding for new Climate Pact Partners**, where EFN was welcomed as a newly selected European Climate Pact Partner. It was an occasion to showcase the EFN's achievements in Planetary Health to other Partners and to the Climate Pact secretariat.
- **“Celebrating Citizens’ Led Climate Action”**, on 8 October 2024, which celebrated Citizens Led Climate action, allowing European Climate Pact Ambassadors to share and showcase their successful initiatives, driven by citizens, which are contributing to the EU Climate goals.
- **Monthly Climate Pact Partners Check-In calls**, where Climate Pact partners and DG CLIMA have the opportunity to meet to discuss and align their activities linked to planetary health.

The EFN will continue following up on these Patient Safety & Quality of Care key points in 2025.

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

a. **HERA Civil Society Forum**

The [European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority](#) (HERA) agency, created in September 2020, aiming to be an instrument to support better preparedness and response across the EU to further pandemics, made a step forward in its development with the establishment of the [HERA Civil Society Forum](#) that acts as a contact point between HERA and stakeholders representing patients, consumers, and healthcare professionals. This sub-group, in which the EFN is involved, is helping to ensure that the HERA Advisory Forum receives regular input, views and opinions from civil society stakeholders, on matters of health preparedness and response, with a focus on medical countermeasures. This supports the work of the Advisory Forum and contributes to its informed opinions and conclusions.



The EFN continued to follow the developments of HERA in 2024, including by providing EFN input to the public consultation on the future of HERA: [Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority \(HERA\) – review \(January 2024\)](#). Discussed also as a key point in the EFN April 2024 General Assembly, in Brussels, the EFN members approved [EFN Policy Statement on HERA Future Impact on Preparedness](#), that calls for more clarity on the collaboration between HERA and the EU member states in times of crisis and on HERA's effective ability to coordinate EU actions in the face of potential unilateral national measures, and reminding that in the preparedness phase, it is important to leverage synergies between HERA and member states' activities and avoid duplication.

Next to this, the EFN followed closely the work for this sub-group, and attended some of its meetings in 2024, as the HERA Civil Society Forum Meeting, held on 19 March, where the civil society partners were briefed on the future of HERA. Attention was paid to strategic stockpiling which is key for the Member States. On HERA's governance, the focus will be on streamlining efforts and working close with other EU agencies. The EFN will continue to follow on HERA developments in 2025, providing the nurses' views and expertise in the policy developments.

b. **European Year of Skills**



Creating a robust and resilient healthcare ecosystem and being better prepared for future challenges requires upskilling and reskilling nurses who can play a key role in the uptake of the twin digital and green transitions in the healthcare setting. Therefore, in 2024 the EFN continued following the [European Year of Skills](#), which was launched in 2023, to address skills shortages in the EU, to promote a mindset of reskilling and upskilling, and to help people to get the right skills for quality jobs.

In April 2024, the European Year of Skills officially came to an end. To celebrate its achievements and discuss the next steps, the European Commission organised on 30 April 2024, a large-scale conference entitled [“The European Year of Skills – what comes next?”](#). The EFN attended this conference as a key stakeholder and partner in the BeWell EU project,

that will create the skills strategy for the healthcare sector to be implemented at a local, regional, national, and ultimately European level. The conference highlighted how the European Year of Skills has supported the EU stakeholders' priorities, creating great impetus towards strategic investments in continuing professional development and life-long learning in the digital and green skills of nurses. Furthermore, the European Year of Skills also provided new momentum to reach the [EU 2030 social targets](#) of at least 60% of adults in training every year, and at least 78% in employment, and it supported the implementation of the [2030 Digital Compass](#) targets of at least 80% of adults with basic digital skills and 20 million employed ICT specialists in the EU.

While the European Year of Skills may be officially over, the EFN will continue to work towards carrying forward the spirit and objectives of the European Year of Skills beyond 2024.

c. EU Pact for Skills

Launched in 2020, the [Pact for Skills](#) aims to mobilise all relevant stakeholders to reflect and decide on the measures to be undertaken in order to adequately skill health professionals. The health sector has been identified as a priority partnership to be launched under the Pact.

As a way to contribute to this development, the EFN, as a partner in the EU project [BeWell](#) that aims to develop a green and digital skills strategy for the health ecosystem that can be implemented at a local, regional, national, and ultimately at the European level through the Pact for Skills, developed two training courses for nurses and allied healthcare professionals: 1/ [Digital Skills](#) – aiming to provide an introduction to the EU policy context on the digitalisation healthcare system, what digitalisation encompasses, and delve deeper into digital health for nurses and what it represents for frontline healthcare professionals ; 2/ [Green Skills](#) – aiming to provide an introduction to the EU policy context of planetary health, what planetary health encompasses, and delve deeper into planetary health education and interdisciplinary collaboration. It offers practical ideas for integrating planetary health principles into daily nursing practice.

Upskilling and reskilling are essential points to be implemented and underline the importance of education and training for nurses' students under graduate ([Directive 2013/55/EU](#), Art 31); qualified nurses with appropriate skills to accelerate professionally and nurses being engaged in Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially in the delivery of nursing services for people with chronic diseases. It is important to implement knowledge, leadership and advocacy, information sharing and to adopt technologies that are problem-solving.

Another development in this pact for skills context, by the European Commission together with the BeWell EU Project, was the launch in 2022 of the [Large-Scale Partnership for the Health Ecosystem](#), of which the EFN is a partner of. This Large-Scale partnership is working towards a future-proof skills strategy to be implemented at local, regional, national, and, ultimately, European levels. As a key partner, the EFN is bringing a nursing perspective into the debate. It is crucial to creating a robust and resilient healthcare ecosystem and to be better prepared for facing future healthcare crises and challenges.

In 2024, the EFN participated in some key meetings linked to this topic, as:

- **Pact for Skills Forum on “Unlocking the Skills Potential Across Europe”**, held on 21-22 April 2024. The event was organised by DG EMPL, providing an overview of the Pact's achievements to date and outlining the vision for its future development. The event was an opportunity for Pact stakeholders, as the EFN, to share their experiences of upskilling and reskilling, as well as their ideas and recommendations for future activities to further increase the impact of the Pact for Skills in the medium to long-term. On the first day, the EFN was selected by the event organisers to showcase in a Worldcafé format, the training programmes for nurses and allied healthcare professionals on the [digital](#) and [green](#) skills developed by EFN in the context of the BeWell EU Project.
- **3rd Partnership Steering Committee meeting**, held on 28 May 2024. The meeting gave an overview on the partnership (LSP) & on [BeWell Skills Strategy Online Public Consultation](#).



- **Pact for Skills networking event for potential members and non-member organisations**, organised by the European Commission on 06 June 2024. This meeting was an opportunity for members and potential members, to share best practices and experiences related to the Pact for Skills.

The EFN has been engaged with the Pact for Skills to address the complexity of skills in the healthcare sector and is looking forward to its developments and collaboration in 2025.

d. Antimicrobial Resistance



Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is a challenge that must be addressed urgently and is therefore at the top of the EFN policy agenda. The [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) (ECDC) estimates that antibiotic-resistant bacteria have been associated with the death of 35.000 people per year in the European Union, a number that has increased in recent years. If no action is taken swiftly and concretely, this will result in catastrophic consequences by 2050.

The EFN believes that nurses have a [crucial role to play](#) in this, as they are frontline professionals, who coordinate interprofessional teams, and they are therefore ideally placed to lead antimicrobial resistance reduction and antibiotic stewardship programmes. With the [EU One Health approach](#), the EU is aiming to tackle AMR more comprehensively on the basis of improved data collection, monitoring and surveillance is important. Aiming to bring the nurses'

views into this development (see the [EFN Policy Statement on AMR One Health Approach](#)), the EFN continues to support and contribute to the European Commission expert group on AMR One Health Network, that aims to facilitate mutual learning, share innovative ideas, build consensus, compare progress made in key areas and, where necessary, accelerate national efforts to tackle AMR.

Building on this, the Belgian EU Presidency (1st January – 31st June 2024) made AMR as one of its priorities (see [Council Conclusions on the Future of the European Health Union: a Europe that cares, prepares, and protects](#)). The EFN has engaged in 2024 with these developments, ensuring that the perspective of nurses was taken into account in the debate. In 2024, the EFN also attended some key meetings dealing with AMR, as:

- **AMR One Health Network meetings**, organised by the European Commission DG Sante, on 1 March 2024 and 24 October 2024, which focused on the implementation of the Council Recommendations on AMR, on HERA's role in combatting AMR, and on international developments in this field.
- **Belgium EU Presidency's High-Level Summit on the Future of the European Health Union**, held on 26-27 March 2024, where keynote panellists like Peter Piot, *Special Adviser to the European Commission President, Global Health Security, EU Chief Scientific Advisor Epidemics*, addressed the importance of tackling AMR, especially since it can be prevented.
- **Belgian EU Presidency's High-Level Conference on Health-related Needs as Drivers for Healthcare Policy and Innovation**, held on 17-18 April 2024, where AMR was pointed out as an important driver of unmet healthcare needs.

The EFN members were informed on the ongoing developments on this key topic, namely during the EFN General Assemblies, through the [EFN Updates](#), the [EFN Website](#), and through EFN Briefing Notes (*available only to the EFN members*).

Finally, as in the previous years the EFN participated in the [European Antimicrobial Awareness Day](#) on 18 November 2024 (coordinated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ([ECDC](#))), through EFN social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn – key words: #EFN #AntimicrobialResistance #AMR #EAAD2024 #awareness #nurses #roleofnurses #frontlinenurses #KeepAntibioticsWorking #stewardship #patients) with key posts to raise awareness of the EU policy Makers, the EU Stakeholders, and the public in general, on this key policy topic.

The EFN will continue to work on this crucial topic in 2025, and to inform the EFN members on regular basis on its developments.



e. Mental Health



Mental health is an increasingly widespread but often stigmatised issue. This is even more the case when it is healthcare professionals that suffer from it. Especially post-COVID, nurses' mental health has been gravely put to the test. The complex, dangerous, and precarious working conditions which they face greatly damage their capacity to continue providing life-saving care and therapy. Therefore, mental health must be taken seriously and targeted as the public health crisis that it is. As such, the EFN has this topic high on its political agenda, lobbying the EU institutions to take concrete actions.

To advance concrete actions, the EFN is taking part in the [EU Project KeepCaring](#), which started on 1st July 2024, and aims to (re-)build wellbeing and resilience of the healthcare workforce in hospital settings, to promote onboarding, as well as staying in the workplace (*See more information page 30*). The EFN is also taking part in the EU funded [WHO led Nursing Action project](#), which aims at improving recruitment and retention through measures which include Safe-Staffing Levels (SSL) and high-quality nursing students mentorships (*See more information in page 34*).

Over the year, the EFN has reminded in the meetings it attended, including with EU representatives, that over the last few years, nurses' mental health and well-being have been put at strain with covid-19 pandemic, and the ongoing war and conflicts. Nurses have 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. Therefore, it is urgent to transform mental health and make sure the EU decision makers take concrete actions to change attitudes, actions and approaches to mental health. It is crucial that the EU decision & policy makers understand that supporting nurses and sustain their mental health are key for delivering high quality care and creating a resilient healthcare ecosystem.

To make sure the nurses' views are taken into account in the policy process, the EFN attended some key EU meetings, as:

- **The conference on “Better working conditions for healthcare professionals in the EU”**, held in the European Parliament on 23 January 2024. The conference addressed the challenges of the healthcare sector that give rise to mental health issues for the health workforce and discussed possible opportunities for action. Invited as keynote speaker, EFN Secretary General clearly remarked that ensuring optimal wages, fair working conditions and health workforce capacity building; and securing sustainable and safe staffing level of the nursing workforce, is key to address the challenges of the nursing workforce.
- **The Belgium EU Presidency's high-level conference on mental health and work**, held on 30-31 January 2024, which brought together experts and decision-makers in the field of mental health and work to address all the challenges that are related to the worsening of mental health in European workplaces, and to share innovative solutions and best practices to help anticipate and plan for the future.
- **The High-level policy dialogue on mental health and the triple planetary crisis: a call for action, co-organised by WHO Europe and the Hungarian EU Presidency**, on 7 October 2024, where EFN was invited as representative of the EU health workforce, to explain how climate change is impacting the mental health of the nursing workforce. The EFN took the opportunity also to share some concrete and actionable proposals to support the nursing workforce in coping with the increased levels of mental health challenges.



In 2025, the EFN will continue to follow up on these developments and bring the nurses' views and expertise to the EU level.

f. EU Semester 2024



The rising cost of healthcare systems is a serious challenge to the continuation of the provision of care in Europe. The [2024 European Semester Country Reports](#), clearly highlighted the rising cost of long-term care due to the ageing of the European population. This situation is made more complex by the rising cost of primary care, due to a tendency of governments to view healthcare only through the lens of hospital care, instead of investing in prevention and outpatient care.

In order to support the EFN members at national level, and as in the previous years, the [EFN analysed the European Semester Country Reports 2024](#), focussing on 3 key points: the Member States' health expenditure, with a focus on prevention; the state of the nursing workforce; and the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP). The 2024 European Semester Country Reports clearly demonstrated the seriousness of the nursing shortage across all the EU Member States. Despite some implemented measures, their effectiveness remains unclear. Moreover, most Member States

are not investing their Recovery and Resilience Funds in the health workforce, despite the urgent necessity for concrete and targeted measures to ensure the resilience of the European health systems.

Even if some improvements are seen in the recent years, with the European Commission placing efforts in better integrating the social dimension in the country analysis, with a stronger attention to the healthcare aspects, even the EU Health Workforce, more needs to be done. The EFN members National Nurses Associations are key in this.

The EFN Brussels Office has been analysing the Country reports since 2016, selecting the relevant information for nurses, nursing and healthcare. In 2025, the EFN will continue supporting the EFN members on this key development and providing them with key information to support their daily lobby work at national level.

g. War in Ukraine and Israel-Gaza conflict

Even Post-COVID-19 pandemic, the mental health, safety and well-being of the frontline nurses caring for those in need, continues to be under enormous danger, with the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

With regards to **Ukraine**, the EFN continued in 2024 to be one of the 3 co-chairs of the **EU Coalition on "Supporting Ukraine, neighbouring EU Member States and Moldova"**, together with the European Cancer Organisation (ECO) and the European Reference Networks (ERN), representing as such the 3 groups of health stakeholders. The network comprises over 250 patient organisations, health professionals, NGOs and industry interested in intelligence sharing as a tool to avoid duplicating efforts, and aims to facilitate the interaction with civil society, encouraging discussions on public health issues, as well as sharing knowledge and best practices and pooling expertise. Moreover, through its regular meetings, it informs on the ongoing activities undertaken by the European Commission to support Ukrainian patients and health professionals, including in the countries hosting Ukrainian refugees. In this network the EFN has been focusing mainly on the recognition and support of the nursing profession, where it can provide the greatest degree of expertise. With the huge shortage of nurses, midwives, physiotherapists in Europe, especially after COVID-19, facilitating the recognition of competences of the huge number of Ukrainian refugee healthcare professionals who are mostly women would be an important achievement.

With regard to the **Israel-Gaza conflict**, the EFN members stood once again together to condemn the attacks on healthcare facilities and healthcare professionals. [An EFN statement was issued](#) on 1st April 2024 in support to the nurses and many other healthcare professionals that are being targeted, and that despite their ambition to continue providing life-saving care, they do not have the resources to do it safely. The EFN and its members called for all parties to the conflict to respect the international principle of medical and healthcare neutrality, that the principles of human rights are upheld and protected, to protect and respect access to healthcare and ensure the safety of the population and the healthcare professionals (cf. [Geneva Convention](#)).

7. Other EU Lobby opportunities for the EFN

In 2024, the EFN took some other opportunities to lobby the EU institutions and to give voice to nurses and to their needs. Looking to the future, the pandemic and the war in Ukraine has increased the need for a European Health Union, stronger Europe-wide coordination, more resilient health systems and better preparation for possible future crises.

- » **WHO-EFNNMA-EFN-ENSA webinar on “Digital Health Transformation”**, on 7 March 2024. The webinar focused on the engagement of nurses and midwives in digital health policy at all levels, including in design of digital solutions that support nurses and midwives. Invited as keynote speaker, EFN Secretary General gave an overview of the EU Pact for Skills and BeWell EU project, and how to invest in nurses to secure success when digitalising the healthcare sector. The digitalisation of the healthcare ecosystem will depend on the resilience of the nursing workforce. Digitalisation of the healthcare sector implies fit for purpose solutions.
- » **WHO-EFNNMA-EFN-ENSA Webinar on Primary Healthcare**, on 7 May 2024, that focused on the evolving landscape of nursing and midwifery in primary health care European WHO Region, highlighting key trends, challenges, and opportunities for the future. The EFN was invited to take part in the panel addressing the expectations of students and midwives to the primary care transformation in Europe.
- » **WHO-EFNNMA-EFN Webinar**, on 4 December 2024, on AI and its implications for nursing and midwifery. Invited as keynote speaker, EFN Secretary General spoke about the strategic implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in health care and its implications for nursing and midwifery across the European region. He explained that situations where AI products function as standalone tools requiring nurses to manually input the same information across different systems should be avoided. This is inefficient and causes frustration and administrative burnout.
- » **WHO-CCHWF - Workforce crisis in healthcare webinars**, on 29 May 2024, 7 June 2024 and 11 June 2024, that aimed to advance the healthcare workforce debate by directing its attention to the implementation of policy recommendations and identifying weaknesses, highlighting a wide range of healthcare workforce policies and interventions across various countries.
- » **Pact for Skills Forum “Unlocking the skills potential across Europe”**, on 21-22 March 2024. Organised by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion (DG EMPL), European Commission, the Pact for Skills Forum provided an overview of the Pact’s achievements and outlined its vision for future development. This was a good opportunity for the Pact stakeholders from various sectors, [including EFN](#) to discuss and exchange on experiences on upskilling and reskilling at a regional level. The EFN took this opportunity to present its work done on upskilling and reskilling, including in the context of the EU project BeWell on Digital & Green skills.
- » **Launch Conference of WHO [Strategic Partners’ Initiative for Data and Digital Health \(SPI-DDH\)](#)**, on 13 June 2024, in Copenhagen. As expert partner, the EFN is contributing to this in order to empower nurses via digitalisation and responsible AI. While in Europe the situation is slowly changing, there is still a limited understanding by policy makers as to their role in driving interoperability across the healthcare ecosystem, which requires first to reach a common understanding of interoperability. This is where the EFN has a key role to play.
- » **CESI meeting on ‘Better working conditions for healthcare professionals in the EU’**, on 23 January 2024, that stressed the need for investments at national and EU level to ensure that the need for healthcare services is meeting the demand. Invited as keynote speaker, the EFN Secretary General made it clear that it is crucial that EU politicians and policymakers need to take immediate action to focus on developing EU legislation to improve recruitment and retention of domestically educated nurses, safe staffing levels, and priorities the welfare of nurses and patients alike.
- » **Symposium ‘Shining a light on person-centred healthcare’**, on 28 February 2024, where the EFN Secretary General was asked to provide the nurses’ views on the current state of nursing workforce in Europe and what is needed at macro level to create healthful cultures. Paul raised the need for the new EU institutions to champion appropriately educated, paid, supported and developed nursing workforce operating in fair working conditions to deliver people-centred care and promote health in the EU.



» **Ghent University Symposium on Nurse Led Clinics**, on 18 April 2024, in Ghent (Belgium) where the EFN Secretary General was invited as keynote speaker. Paul raised the Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Nurse Led Clinics in the EU, supported with the [APN developments](#) in the EU.

» **CNOs' meeting**, on 26 April 2024, in Brussels, where EFN President, Aristides Chorattas, invited as keynote speaker, raised the issue of mental health and burnout within the nursing profession; and highlighted the need for reliable and valid data in order to protect and change the system we are currently working in. He also stressed the serious concerns about violence against nurses, and the **under-reporting violent incidents** due to fear of victimisation and overall employer discouragement.



» **Webinar 'Back to the Future, Nurse! ENSA: Amplifying Voices, Celebrating Mentors'**, on 6 May 2024, to celebrate the International Nursing Week. Invited as keynote speaker, the EFN Secretary General raised EU Student Mentorship, and the fact that investing in effective mentorship is fundamental to ensuring retention, as well as a mentor for nursing students, it is key to make sure to get in compliance with the [8 competencies](#) of Directive 2013/55/EU.

» **UNITAR / CIFAL York University & the Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH) 'Nurses' Voices Speakers' Series'**, on 7 May 2024, aiming to provide a global public platform for nurses to share their leading stories of concern, compassion, and commitment to humanity's health. The event brought together professionals, researchers, and students in the fields of nursing education, clinical practice, public health, and related academic, non-governmental and intergovernmental fields, as well as national Health Ministers and United Nations Representatives. Invited as keynote speaker, the EFN Secretary General focused on the promotion and protection of nurses and the nursing profession, highlighting that *"we are not prepared unless we are all prepared!"*

» **International Conference on 'Advanced Practice of Nurses and Midwives as a Value for the Patient, the System and the Payer'**, organised by the Main Chamber of Nurses and Midwives and the Medical University of Gdańsk, on 16-17 May 2024, in Gdańsk (Poland). Invited as keynote speaker, EFN Secretary General stressed [EFN latest developments on APN](#), including EFN Roadmap for Implementation, and highlighted nurse prescribing with the number of countries where nurses are legally permitted to prescribe medicines and medical products has grown significantly over a number of decades. Evidence suggests the benefits of extended nurse prescribing include improved access to treatment, enhanced care, more effective use of the workforce, strengthened inter-professional working practices, and increased patient and professional satisfaction.



» **AIM meeting on Resilient Care Workforce**, on 23 May 2024, where the EFN was invited to share nurses' views on the topic. EFN Secretary General explained that we cannot have health security without accessible high quality health care systems, and no strong effective health system without well trained and qualified healthcare professionals, in sufficient numbers, coordinated and practicing in a multidisciplinary way.

» **eHealth Stakeholder Group (eHSG) Workshop on the Cybersecurity of Healthcare Providers**, on 11 October 2024, where the EFN presented the expectations of frontline nurses in the context of the proposed action plan, and raised the need for EU policymakers to reflect on what nurses at the bedside need as support in case of a cyberattack.

» **European Health Summit**, on 3-4 December 2024, in Brussels. Providing a good platform to shape the healthcare agenda of the EU for the next legislative cycle and work towards a resilient healthcare model in the EU, the Summit highlighted key healthcare issues in Europe and beyond, such as digital acceleration, pandemic



preparedness, industrial policy, sustainable healthcare systems, and optimising patient-centricity. Invited as keynote speaker in the panel “Beyond the Invisible: Building Europe’s Mental Health Resilience”, EFN President raised how difficult working conditions, poor salaries, and lack of recognition, are leading to high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout in the nursing profession. These issues are compounded by badly implemented digitalisation, violence against nurses and allied healthcare professionals, and climate change. To tackle the rising rates of mental health issues affecting EU Nurses, he emphasised the work that the EU is doing through both [BeWell](#) and [KEEPCARING](#) EU Projects, where EFN is a key partner. And raised the need to foster the implementation of EU best practices, and giving nurses' mental health issues the right level of attention.

8. 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 addressing to key political players to help them to push for their key concerns at national level.

↳ Supporting letters



One of the ways for the EFN to support its members is through sending them supporting letters when needed on some key issues. The main topics are nurses’ shortage, governments trying to downgrade the nursing profession, or working conditions. Nurses are a valuable resource and meeting their needs will allow them to stay within the nursing profession. Today, this is not the case, and nurses are massively leaving the profession. The European Union fully respects the contribution and potential of nurses to deliver on European wide health policies and initiatives. It is therefore 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, and that they make sure that their healthcare systems have the necessary nursing workforce, with the necessary competences in line with the EU [Directive 2005/36/EC](#) amended by [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), to provide high-quality and safe healthcare services to citizens and patients.

↳ EFN Members visiting Brussels and the EU Institutions

Bringing to Brussels NNAs delegations is a good opportunity for the EFN Members’ NNAs to meet with their country EU representatives and learn more about the EFN political agenda, how this agenda is influencing and influenced by the EU Institutions, the outcomes achieved by EFN, and the role of the EU Institutions in relation to the EU health policy. The main topics presented on these occasions: the EFN’s key priorities in the EU lobby process, including Directive 36/55 and the challenges for nursing education; the EU projects the EFN has been involved in, and the importance of investing in the EU lobby process. The EFN welcomes this initiative and pro-active attitude from EFN members. Not only as this increases the visibility and reputation of nurses at EU level but also because it shows that they are serious about their profession and the issues that have an impact on it. Therefore, the EFN members are encouraged to continue these efforts in 2025 in order to give the nursing perspective to the EU on key topics.

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

- » **30th anniversary of the Moldova Nursing Association National conference** (EFN member), on 26 October 2024, in Moldova. Invited as keynote speaker, the EFN Secretary General stressed the importance of compliance with the EU Directive 2013/55/EU, and highlighted future policies for nurses, including Safe Staffing levels, and the EU accession process opportunities.
- » **3rd International Nursing Convention**, on 21-23 November 2024, in Portugal, organised by EFN member Ordem dos Enfermeiros, where EFN President, invited as keynote speaker, stressed the EFN developments on Advanced Practice Nurses and nurse prescribing. Believing on the importance of the Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) for the delivery of positive health outcomes, the EFN has been committed to ensuring the nursing profession evolves effectively in response to patient needs and care demands.



II. EU PROJECTS

A. BEWELL – BLUEPRINT ALLIANCE FOR A FUTURE HEALTH WORKFORCE STRATEGY ON DIGITAL AND GREEN SKILLS



The 4-year [BeWell project](#), launched on 1st July 2022, and co-funded under [Erasmus+ programme](#) (Grant Agreement No 101056563) aims to form an alliance, to build a movement of all healthcare stakeholders supporting and committed to the development, implementation, and upscaling of the strategy on upskilling and reskilling of the European health workforce ; and to develop a green and digital skills strategy for the health ecosystem that can be implemented at a local, regional, national, and ultimately at the European level through the [Pact for Skills](#).

By addressing the existing skill mismatches and strengthening competencies, the project should enable the healthcare professionals to be better prepared to face future challenges and adapt to ever-evolving societal contexts. To reach this ambitious goal, the BeWell project will build comprehensive curricula and training programmes targeting all healthcare professionals, including students, health professionals and professionals of emerging occupations.



The EFN is actively participating in most Work Packages, as the development of the skills strategy (WP3), based on WP2 - mapping of existing upskilling and reskilling initiatives and upscaling analysis/findings, led by European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (Observatory) and the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research (Nivel). The main purpose of WP3 is to produce a strategy for the European health ecosystem that has systemic and structural impact on reducing skills shortages, gaps and mismatches, as well as ensuring appropriate quality and levels of skills.

The EFN will take part of the development of the exploitation plan once the main results are achieved (WP4, WP5 and WP6). Moreover, having a huge network, the EFN is taking part in WP9 to deliver communication and dissemination activities. The EFN, representing 3 million nurses in EU and 6 million in Europe, is bringing the perspective of frontline nurses to the project with the goal of developing digital and green skills that can truly benefit nurses, healthcare professionals and the entire healthcare ecosystem.

Consortium: [European Health Management Association \(EHMA\)](#), [EChAlliance \(ECHA\)](#), [EuroHealthNet](#), [Nuove Tecnologie della Vita Academy \(ITS\)](#), [Comite Europeen de coordination des industries radiologiques et d'informatique de Sante AISBL \(COGIR\)](#), [EIT Health EV](#), [University of Thessaly \(UTH\)](#), [European Health Telematics Association \(EHTEL\)](#), [Euromasc AS](#), [Wiener Institut fur Arbeitsmarkt – und Bildungsforschung \(WIAB\)](#), [European Regional and Local Health Authorities ASBL \(EUREGHA\)](#), [Stichting Nederlands Instituut voor Onderzoek Van de Gezondheidszorg \(NIVEL\)](#), [DATEY Eyrich GMBH \(DATEY\)](#), [Universitatea Babeş Bolyai \(UBB\)](#), [Università degli Studi di Bergamo \(UNIBG\)](#), [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), [European Specialist Nurses organisation \(ESNO\)](#), [Cesi International \(CESI\)](#), [European Forum for Primary Care \(EFPC\)](#), [Pharmaceutical Group of the EU \(PGEU\)](#), [Medical University of Varna \(MU-Varna\)](#), [Biomedical Alliance in Europe \(BioMed Alliance\)](#), [INNLANDET FYLKESKOMMUNE \(Faglinn\)](#), [European Federation of Nurses Associations \(EFN\)](#).

» Project Meetings

Over the year, the EFN participated in several meetings linked to the project, as:

i. Work Packages Meetings

Being involved in most of the project Work Packages (WPs), the EFN will follow closely their developments. As such, the EFN has been participating in all the regular meetings of the several WPs, organised since the beginning of the project, providing the nurses' input whenever requested and where needed. The EFN will continue to do so in 2025.

ii. Third General Assembly

The [third BeWell General Assembly](#), that took place on 19-20 June 2024, in Bergamo (Italy), was dedicated to the presentation of the latest outcomes of the project and ongoing activities, including the launch of the [Open-Public Consultation](#) (OPC) on the first version of the [BeWell Skills Strategy](#) (WP3). Accessible in 9 languages, this OPC targets the input of the healthcare workforce, education providers, civil society and labour organisation representatives, and policy makers. Moreover, the EFN and the other partners of the BeWell project discussed the results of the first piloting phase of the BeWell training programmes (WP6), giving all the partners who developed the training programmes (WP5), strong input on ways to improve the quality and relevance of the content. The [Digital Skills for Nurses and HCP MOOC/Course](#), developed by the EFN (which has received international accreditation from International Continuing Nursing Education Credits (ICNECs)) was also piloted and received very positive feedback, with particular focus on the quality of the content and the relevance of the skills being taught, as they are in high demand on the labour market.



iii. BeWell Design Meeting

The **BeWell WP5 Design Meeting** held in Bergamo on 20-21 June 2024, on the side-lines of the General Assembly, focused on the **Design of core curricula and training programmes**, that follows 2 directions:

- ✓ The development of new curricula and training courses for the re-skilling and upskilling of the healthcare professionals focusing on green skills, digital skills and pandemic-related issues.
- ✓ The development of new curricula and training courses for students, healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors, operators, managers) and companies that will connect the needs of the health system and the companies.

Over 2 days, the project partners discussed possible ways to update and upgrade the training programmes, based on the input received during the first piloting phase (WP6). In 2025, WP5 will continue developing this deliverable.



» Deliverables

Below some of the 2024 deliverables developed by the consortium:

- BeWell has so far developed the first version of the [BeWell Skills Strategy](#) (available in 9 languages) – created using BeWell consortium members' expertise, and skills intelligence gathered. Being one of the main outcomes of the project, this strategy will be developed until the end of the project (2026), and aims to be implemented at a local, regional, national, and ultimately at the European level through the [Pact for Skills](#). You can [read here](#) the summary of the BeWell Skills Strategy.
- As part of the skills strategy second version development, the project launched in June 2024 an [Open Public Consultation](#) (Available in 9 languages). The aim of this questionnaire is to engage and incorporate the views and opinions of health and care professionals, researchers and educators, patients and patient organisations, decision and policy makers and any other relevant stakeholders into the BeWell Skills Strategy. To take part in the Consultation [click here](#).
- [Skills Monitor](#) - Its goal is to provide an overview of upskilling and reskilling possibilities to empower the digitalisation and ecologicalisation of the health and care sector. You can contribute to it by clicking [here](#).
- The project is currently developing a [BeWell Learning Platform](#) – that will be available on several languages, providing training courses on digital skills and green skills, to which **EFN has contributed with 2 MOOCs ([Digital skills](#) and [Green skills](#))**.
- [Large-Scale Partnership](#): The large-scale partnership is multi-stakeholder partnership on health workforce upskilling and reskilling, created through BeWell in the context of the [Pact for Skills](#), aiming to support the twin transition to a green and digital economy, making EU health systems more competitive globally and enhancing Europe's open strategic autonomy. Being one of the project deliverables, it has 49 signatories, including EFN.
- [Newsletters](#) – published twice a year, it provides an overview of the most important news related to the project development.

» **Dissemination**



<< **EU and EFN internal meetings**

In 2024, the EFN presented the project at the:

- » EFN General Assembly April & October 2024
- » EFN Executive Committee meeting February & September 2024
- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs (e.g.: with DG CONNECT, DG SANTE, DG GROW)
- » EU events in which the EFN participated, organised by EU Stakeholders, etc.

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 2024, the EFN mentioned the project in its Updates of: [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(I\) – April 2024](#) and [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(II\) – October 2024](#).



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

The EFN uses social media to spread information on the project, as on 19 June to highlight the BeWell General Assembly, and on 21 June for the Design Meeting. Key words: #skills #skillsstrategy #greenskills #digitalskills #nurses #healthcareprofessionals #generalassembly2024 @BeWellProjectEU. **EFN posts reached, in 2024, 16,921 people and 338 people interacted with EFN.** The top views for a BeWell post were reached with the one published on 19/06/2024, seen by **1,771 people**, with **38 people that reacted to it**, followed by the one published on 19/06/2024, that was seen by **1,548 people**, with **34 people that reacted to it**, across all the EFN social media.



EFN Website >>

To make the project visible, the EFN included a [section](#) dedicated to the project on its Website with some key information and updated on regular basis. Next to that, the EFN [Website](#) homepage is also important in this process of dissemination. When key, the EFN refers to the project there, as in June 2024 with the EFN homepage news "[BeWell General Assembly in Bergamo](#)".

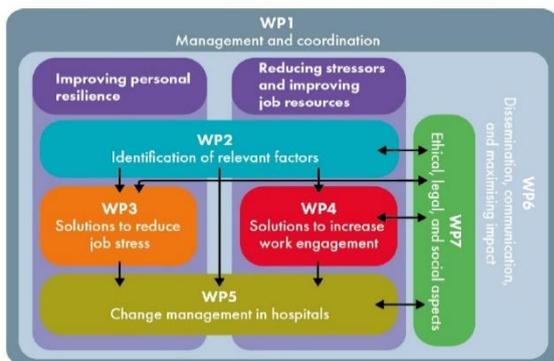


B. KEEPCARING – FUTURE PROOFING HEALTH AND CARE SYSTEMS, SAFEGUARDING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN HOSPITAL SETTINGS



The 4-year [KEEPCARING](#) project, launched on 1st July 2024, and co-funded under the Horizon Europe programme (*Grant Agreement No 101137244*) aims to (re-)build wellbeing and resilience of the healthcare workforce in hospital settings, to promote onboarding, as well as staying in the workplace.

The project aims at: identifying new factors that influence job resources, resilience and stress in (aspiring) healthcare professionals; empowering the hospital workforce (including students) in the surgical pathway by evaluating the (cost-) effectiveness of existing (digital) tools and by further augmenting these tools based on user insights; by supporting healthcare professionals and students in the dynamics of joint interaction in teams, to identify leadership styles and strategies ('towards a safer and supportive working place'); by supporting hospital organisations to understand what factors to consider - and how they are likely to play out- in making decisions for sustaining a healthy, inclusive and diversified workforce; and finally, by developing, validating, and valorising a data-driven AI-prediction model to be embedded in an online Change Management Platform (CMP), which is able to forecast which interventions under which circumstances contribute towards a more resilient hospital working environment.



The EFN is actively participating in most Work Packages, as the one fostering Change management in hospital organisations (WP5), led by Nuromedia GmbH. The main purpose of WP5 is to develop an interactive, web-based, responsive KEEPCARING Change Management Platform (CMP) presenting goals and mission, overview, innovative integrative solutions and management approaches able to impact organisational models to support healthcare decisions makers. In the context of WP5, the EFN will also be responsible for the development of psychoeducational online course tailored to healthcare professionals at the surgical wards, empowering them to better

use and enhance their coping skill by being active learners. Moreover, having a huge network, the EFN is taking part in WP6 to deliver communication and dissemination activities. The EFN, representing 3 million nurses in EU and 6 million in Europe, is bringing the perspective of frontline nurses to the project with the goal of developing effective tools to (re-)build wellbeing and resilience of the healthcare workforce in hospital settings, through co-creation.

The [consortium](#) consists of 20 beneficiaries from 11 countries with a geographical diversity that ensures the representation of different cultural, social, political, educational structures, values and traditions. The partnership brings together a substantial and diverse pool of leaders representing stakeholders in the health sector at regional, national, and European levels.

Consortium: [Amsterdam University Medical Centers \(AMC\)](#), [University of Limerick \(UL\)](#), [Nuromedia GmbH \(NURO\)](#), [Erasmus University Rotterdam \(EUR\)](#), [European Connected Health Alliance \(ECHA\)](#), [Chino Srl \(CHINO\)](#), [University of Warwick \(UoW\)](#), [Zealand University Denmark \(RegioZ\)](#), [Inland Norway University \(INN\)](#), [The National Research Council of Italy \(CNR\)](#), [University of Coimbra \(UoC\)](#), [University of Tartu \(UoT\)](#), [University of York \(UoY\)](#), [Healthy Mind \(HM\)](#), [NOVA University of Lisbon \(NOVA\)](#), [University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf \(UKE\)](#), [The National Hospital of Denmark \(RIGS\)](#), [European Hospital and Healthcare Federation \(HOPE\)](#), [European Union of Medical Specialists \(UEMS\)](#), [European Federation of Nurses Associations \(EFN\)](#).

» Project Meetings

Since the start of the project in July 2024, the EFN participated in several meetings linked to the project, as:

i. Work Packages Meetings

Being involved in most of the project Work Packages (WPs), the EFN has been participating in the regular WPs meetings, providing the nurses' views and input whenever requested and where needed. The EFN will continue to do so in 2025.

ii. Executive Board Meetings

Being part of the project Executive Board, which plays an important role in ensuring coordination of the many tasks and deliverables of the project, the EFN has been attending the regular Executive Board meetings that have been taking place since the launch of the project. Being part of the Executive Board of the project is key to bring nurses' views and expertise in a more proactive way to the project. The EFN will continue to do so in 2025.

iii. General Assemblies

Two General Assemblies took place in 2024. The EFN attended both.



» The first General Assembly, held online on 9 July 2024, just after the launch of the project, was seen as a good occasion for all the partners to introduce themselves and get to know each other. The contact person for each partner was identified, as well as the General Assembly representatives. The project Executive Board was elected at this meeting, which includes the EFN as a Member of it. Finally, the partners were briefed on the different Work Packages and the main tasks to be done for each.

» The second KeepCaring General Assembly took place between 14-15

November 2024 in Amsterdam. The meeting was a great opportunity for all the partners to meet in person for the first time and get to know each other, including the advisory board composed of experts from different sectors, who shared key insights to support the deliverables of the project. Key discussions took place on the project ongoing work and next steps, including on clinical studies, technical and portal, and ethics and dissemination. The partners had the chance to share the perspectives on the project's challenges and objectives and highlighted the need for an effective data collection, management, and processing plan, the potential for a job-crafting platform to optimise outcomes for teams of healthcare professionals in the OR, and the need for a targeted dissemination campaign.



» Dissemination



<< EU and EFN internal meetings

In 2024, the EFN presented the project at the:

- » EFN General Assembly April & October 2024
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The EFN uses its Newsletter (EFN Update) to spread information on the projects to its members and other key EU health alliances. In 2024, the EFN mentioned the project in its Updates of: [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(I\) – April 2024](#) and [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(II\) – October 2024](#).



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

The EFN uses social media to spread information on the project, as on 14-15 November 2024 to highlight the project General Assembly. Key words: #MentalHealth #wellbeing #workforce #Nurses #KeepCaring. **EFN posts reached, in 2024, 11,093 people and 285 people interacted with EFN.** The top views for a KeepCaring post were reached with the one published on 09/07/2024, seen by **1,707 people**, with **9 people that reacted to it**, across all the EFN social media, followed by the one published on 12/04/2024, that was seen by **1,564 people**, with **27 people that reacted to it**, across all the EFN social media.



EFN Website >>

To make the project visible, the EFN included a [section](#) dedicated to the project on its Website with some key information. Next to that, the EFN [Website](#) homepage is also important in this process of dissemination. When key, the EFN refers to the project there, as on 15 November 2024: [“EFN attending KeepCaring EU project 2nd General Assembly in Amsterdam”](#).



C. ICUDATA4EU – FEDERATED EUROPEAN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INTENSIVE CARE UNITS' (ICU) DATA

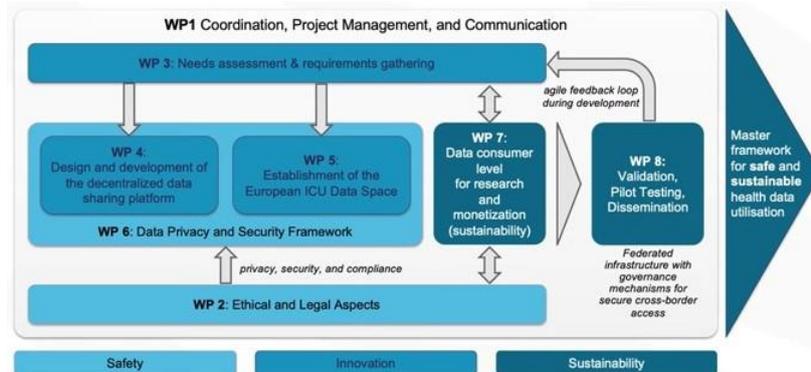


Funded under the Digital Europe Programme ([DIGITAL](#)) (*Grant Agreement No 101168169*), this 3.5-years EU project, aims to establish and deploy a pan-European federated infrastructure for Intensive Care Units' (ICU) data combined with governance mechanisms allowing secure cross-border access to ICU datasets. With a strong consortium and building on established networks, societies and federated

infrastructures, ICUdata4EU will address the challenges that Intensive Care Units (ICUs) are facing, such as aging society, combined with a shortage of specialised staff, with the possibility to also address crisis situations, such as future pandemics or wars.

The project is supported by [EU Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) (RRF), and will contribute to the implementation of the objective of [Digital Europe programme](#), to ensure the deployment of sectorial common data spaces, based on the secure and energy-efficient federated cloud-to-edge infrastructure, that should be accessible to businesses and the public sector, and will support the objectives of Digital Europe programme with regards to deployment of Artificial Intelligence and the Best Use of

Digital Capacity and Interoperability, as well as the promotion of Cybersecurity and Trust, and Advanced Digital Skills. ICUdata4EU will confirm and demonstrate the effectiveness of the dataspace infrastructure in terms of its security, interoperability with datasets and modelling tools, and potential for improvement in care provision, efficiency, and effectiveness, with a 'Data Space for ICU data' aiming to be fully interoperable with the [European Health Data Space \(EHDS\)](#).



The EFN is part of **WP3** (Needs Assessment and Requirements Gathering for the European ICU Data Space) and **WP8** (Validation, Pilot Testing, and Dissemination), supporting the project with communication & dissemination of the project activities, and enhancing skills and workplace aspects, namely by validating the utility of the platform for simulation and analysis tools.

Consortium: [Universitaetsklinikum Aachen](#); [Clinomic Solutions GmbH](#); [Krankenhaus Duren GEM. GmbH](#); [Information Technology for Translational Medicine \(ITTM\) SA](#); [PNED GIE \(LNDS\)](#); [Secretaria Regional da saude](#); [Université de Liège](#); [Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft Österreichische Vereinigung Zur Forderung Der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung](#); [Medizinische Universitaet Wien](#); [Panepistimio Ioanninon](#); [Panepistimiako Geniko Nosokomeio Irakleiou](#); [Idryma Technologias Kai Erevnas](#); [Spitalul Clinic de Boli Infectioase](#); [Spitalul Clinic Municipal Cluj-Napoca](#); [Paula Stradina Kliniska Universitates Slimnica](#); [European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care AISBL](#); [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#); and [Fraunhofer Gesellschaft Zur Forderung Der Angewandten Forschung EV](#).

» Project Meetings

The project started in October, with the EFN participating in the first General Assembly that took place on 24-25 October 2024. The meeting was an opportunity for the project partners to meet and get to know each other, while key discussions took place. The Project's coordinator gave an overview of the project's overarching purpose and objectives. Each partner then had the opportunity to present who they are and what they do both within and outside of the project. The WP leads highlighted the main tasks and deliverables for each WP, giving a clear indication of the next steps, challenges, and final objectives. Finally, important decisions were made with regards to the next steps and to the way the project partners regular meetings will be arranged and scheduled. The EFN will follow the project meetings and developments closely, bringing in the nurses' views.

» Dissemination

<< EU and EFN internal meetings

The EFN sees dissemination as a key development in all and every project since its very beginning. As such, in 2024, the EFN started to provide information and to present the project on several occasions as at the:

- » EFN General Assembly April & October 2024
- » EFN Executive Committee meeting February & September 2024
- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs (e.g.: with DG CONNECT, DG SANTE, DG GROW)
- » EU events in which the EFN participated, organised by EU Stakeholders, etc.



EFN Updates >>

Used as tool to spread information on the projects to its members and other key EU health alliances, in 2024 the EFN mentioned the project in its Newsletter (EFN Update) of October 2024. See here: [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(II\) – October 2024](#).



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

Even if the project just started, the EFN already started to spread the information on its social media channels, as 18 October 2024, on the occasion of EFN General Assembly, where the members were informed on the project. The EFN will continue in 2025 to disseminate on the project through its social media, whenever seen appropriate/important to do so.



EFN Website >>

To make the project visible, the EFN included a [section](#) dedicated to the project on its Website with some key information. Next to that, the EFN [Website](#) homepage is also important in this process of dissemination. When key, the EFN refers to the project there, as on 31st October 2024: '[ICUData4EU EU project](#)'.



D. WHO EU NURSING ACTION

The 3-years [EU Nursing Action](#), is a project financed by the European Commission through the [EU4Health programme](#), which aims to support Member States of the European Union (EU) retain nurses in their health systems and to help make the profession more attractive to nurses, building on the WHO Framework for Action on the Health and Care Workforce. The funding will be used across all 27 EU Member States, with a particular focus on those countries facing significant shortages of nursing staff.

The EFN is a key partner in this project collecting best practices on recruitment and retention of nurses, through EFN Members', which can then be implemented in all the EU Member States. This is crucial, as highlighted by Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, "Nurses are key to our health systems, yet many countries are struggling to retain or attract the numbers needed to meet the growing and evolving needs of their populations. This new initiative is a sign of our joint commitment to address that and to ensure that patients get the high-quality, professional care when and where they need it."



Among other deliverables, the funding will support creating recruitment action plans, mentoring programmes to attract a new generation of nurses, drafting nurse workforce impact assessments to understand the problems behind these structural shortages and strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of nurses, and implementing training opportunities and actions to ensure the healthcare workforce can reap benefits of the digital transformation. The EFN will - through the expertise of the EFN Members - lead the development of a Policy Brief on Safe-Staffing Levels, and a Policy Brief on Mentorship, focused on sharing positive examples from the EU and the globe that can be used by countries in EU.

In addition to EFN, WHO involved other key EU stakeholders, including the [European Federation of Public Service Unions](#) (EPSU), the [European Nursing Students Association](#) (ENSA), and the European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNMA). Other key stakeholders involved in this EU Nursing Action include the EU Governments, represented by either the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the HRH Focal Points, the Data Focal Points, or the GCNOs, according to the national context.

Through the collaboration of key stakeholders representing the European nurses, and the EU Member States, this project presents a great opportunity to develop EU and European policies fit-for purpose on recruitment and retention of nurses, which are crucial to the development of a resilient European Nursing Workforce.

» Deliverables

The main deliverables for the EFN to provide by June 2025, as WHO subcontractor in this project, are 2 Policy Briefs:

- ☞ **Recruitment - Nursing Students Mentorship:** through data collection and intelligence gathering on Nursing Students Mentorship best practices from the EFN Members and a literature review, the EFN is currently developing a **Policy Brief on Nursing Students Mentorship**.
- ☞ **Retention - Nursing Safe Staffing Levels:** through data collection and intelligence gathering on Nursing Safe-Staffing Levels best practices from the EFN Members and a literature review, the EFN is currently developing a **Policy Brief on Nursing Safe Staffing Levels**.

» Dissemination

<< EU and EFN internal meetings

In 2024, the EFN presented the project at the:

- » EFN General Assembly April & October 2024
- » EFN Executive Committee meeting February & September 2024
- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs (e.g.: with DG CONNECT, DG SANTE, DG GROW)
- » EU events in which the EFN participated, organised by EU Stakeholders, etc.



EFN Updates >>

Used as tool to spread information on the projects to its members and other key EU health alliances, in 2024 the EFN mentioned the project in its Newsletter (EFN Update) of October 2024. See here: [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(II\) – October 2024](#).



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 2024, 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. Building alliances is a good way to work closer to the EU Institutions and get nurses' voice and message across their lobby agenda.

➤ 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 (Directive 36/55), Workforce, and Patient Safety and Quality of Care, including digitalisation - the 3 EFN main lobby topics, and participating in the same EU projects, as [BeWell](#), [KeepCaring](#), etc. In 2024, the EFN continued this good collaboration 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; and the European Midwives Association ([EMA](#)), representing midwifery organisations and associations at EU level. The EFN is looking forward to continuing, in 2025, 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 continued its close collaboration with the following organisations:

➤ 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 Campaign 2023-25 - [Safe and healthy work in the digital age](#)', the EFN continued to work closely with OSHA in 2024 to create a safe workplace to improve trust and safety for all the EU healthcare professionals, namely through some meetings and raising awareness about the critical workplace transformations. The EFN looks forward to continuing to strengthen this close collaboration in 2025.

➤ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)



In 2024, the EFN followed closely the work done by the [ECDC](#), aiming to strengthen Europe's defences against infectious diseases, on Antimicrobial Resistance, and strengthened EFN/ECDC close collaboration on the topic, namely by contributing to the [European Antibiotic Awareness Day](#), as for previous years, including through a social media campaign from 18 to 24 November 2024 - See more information, page ...

(Key words: #EAAD2024 #EFN #AntimicrobialResistance #AMR #awareness #nurses #frontlinenurses #KeepAntibioticsWorking #stewardship). Knowing that AMR stays high on the EFN policy agenda, the EFN will continue to follow closely the ECDC developments on this topic and develop this important collaboration in 2025.

➤ European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)



[CESI](#) advocates improved employment conditions for workers in Europe and a strong social dimension in the EU. In 2024, the EFN was invited to participate in some CESI meetings, namely as keynote speaker on 'Better working conditions for healthcare professionals in the EU', and 'Labour shortage in the healthcare sector / Professional Qualifications Directive'. Investments at national and EU level are key to ensure that the need for healthcare services is meeting the demand. Next to that, EFN and CESI are both key partners in the BeWell EU project. The EFN is looking forward to continuing strengthening this close collaboration with CESI in 2025.

➤ **European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE)**



Representing hospitals, [HOPE](#) aims to promote improvements in the health of citizens throughout Europe, fostering efficiency, effectiveness and humanity in the organisation and operation of hospital and healthcare services. As with the sectorial professions' organisations, HOPE has been collaborating closely with EFN in the EU lobby arena, over the years, in many topics: Education, Patient Safety & Quality of Care, including eHealth, workforce, including professionals' mobility, new skills, Cross-Border healthcare, just to name a few. In 2024, the EFN and HOPE continued working closely, namely on EU projects in which both are partners. The EFN is looking forward to continuing this close collaboration with HOPE in 2025.

➤ **European Public Services Union (EPSU)**



The EFN has always valued a solid partnership with social partners, particularly with regards to creating common positions, evaluating the implications of health policies for health care services, and monitoring the implementation of key legislation at national level. In 2024, the EFN and EPSU continued their dialogue, sharing views and experiences on issues that are of key concern to both parties, namely on: staff shortages and on Social Dialogue – a key priority in the Belgium EU Presidency agenda. The EFN looks forward to continuing to strengthen this close collaboration in 2025.

➤ **International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM)**



AIM is the international umbrella organisation of federations of health mutuals and health insurance bodies, aiming to develop and defend universal access to high-quality, affordable healthcare along with social protection. In 2024, in the context of AIM development of a set of recommendations to provide the new EU Commission on health and care workforce, the EFN was invited to provide nurses' views and expertise on resilient care workforce, taking into account all the work the EFN has been doing on this and the EU developments as the European Care Strategy, the Council recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care, and the action plan on labour skills and shortages. The EFN believes we cannot be health security without accessible high quality health care systems, and no strong effective health system without well trained and qualified healthcare professionals, in sufficient numbers, coordinated and practicing in a multidisciplinary way. The EFN is looking forward to continuing this good collaboration with AIM in 2025.

➤ **International Council of Nurses (ICN)**



Representing the nurses worldwide, and having an observer status in EFN General Assemblies, the [ICN](#) has been collaborating with EFN on some nurses and nursing key topics for many years. In 2024, the EFN and ICN continued their good collaboration, namely through ICN participation in EFN General Assemblies, and meetings between EFN & ICN to discuss common concerns, as workforce. The EFN looks forward to continuing this close collaboration in 2025.

➤ **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**



Aiming to provide a forum for governments to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems, [OECD](#) mission is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. Taking that into account, the EFN kept in contact with the OECD in 2024, namely as regards workforce, and participated in some of their meetings to make sure that the nurses' views and expertise were taken into account in OECD latest developments. The EFN will continue to strengthen this close collaboration with OECD in 2025.

➤ **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. The EFN is part of the [WHO Consortium of non-state actors](#) (WHO-NSA),

and of the [WHO Civil Society Commission](#) (WHO CSO) aiming to strengthen dialogue, foster collaboration and provide recommendations to support WHO's Secretariat in its engagement with civil society at global, regional, and national levels to achieve health for all. The EFN is also part of WHO [Strategic Partners' Initiative for Data and Digital Health \(SPI-DDH\)](#) that aims to operationalise the WHO Global strategy on digital health 2020–2025.

Next to the meetings linked to these expert groups that the EFN attended on regular basis, in 2024, the EFN had/organised some other meetings with WHO, as:

- **Regular meetings with WHO** in the context of the **WHO Nursing Action EU project**, of which the EFN is a partner of responsible to develop 2 Policy Briefs on Safe Staffing Levels & Mentorship.
- **Regular meetings for the WHO [survey](#) on mental health of health-care professionals**, that aims to gather crucial data to better understand the challenges doctors and nurses face in their work environments.
- **WHO-EFN-EFNMA meetings series**, designed to support the implementation of the [Nursing and Midwifery WHO Euro Roadmap](#) by focusing on each of the four strategic priorities for development: Education, Jobs, Leadership and Service Delivery. *See more on these meetings on page 23.*
- **74th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe**, October 2024. Even though the EFN was not present in Copenhagen, the EFN made sure that the nurses' voice was part of the policy topics/debates, through **Joint statements**, to show EU Stakeholders' cooperation and dedication to key topics that deserve concrete attention and action as a priority:
 - o **[Joint statement - ICN, ENSA, EFN, EFNMA, EuroSafe, VAS, IAHPC, EUROCAM](#)** (*agenda item 9 on Framework for resilient and sustainable health systems in the WHO European Region 2025-2030*), calling the Member States to actively engage civil society in co-creating national plans for health system transformation and to prioritise investments in the health and care workforce.
 - o **[Joint statement - ICN, EFNMA, ENSA, EFN](#)** (*agenda item 10 on Health emergency preparedness*), calling for workforce capacity-building and surge preparedness, and protection of the health workforce and safeguarding rights to ensuring they can respond effectively in emergencies and ensuring the continuity of health services.
 - o **[Joint statement - EuroHealthNet, EFN, EFPC, EHN, EPHA, EUPHA, IDF Europe, IFMSA](#)** (*agenda item 10 on Health emergency preparedness*), calling for a stronger focus on health promotion, cross-sectoral governance to address determinants of health, dual-track approach to mental health with surge capacity to address both community and health worker needs in times of crisis, and consideration of climate crisis adaptation measures.
 - o **[Joint statement - ICN, EFNMA, ENSA, EFN](#)** (*agenda item 11 on Emergency Medical Teams*), emphasising the importance of investing in education and regular training of health professionals to ensure preparedness, of including nursing and midwifery representatives in planning structures and processes to ensure effective coordination and response ; and enhancing EMT interoperability between government organizations, defence health department and NGOs to strengthen health emergency preparedness and response.
 - o **[Joint statement - ICN, EFNMA, ENSA, EFN](#)** (*agenda item 12 Harnessing innovation for public health*), raising the need for a strategic approach to Innovation to enable health systems to respond to changing demands and health emergencies in the region.

As in the previous years, the EFN participated in the WHO European Immunisation Week 2024 (#EIW2024), through a social media campaign from 21 to 27 April 2024. (Key words: #EIW2024 #GetVaccinated #Nursesforvaccination #Nurses#Prevention #Longlifeforall #EPI #vaccination #coalitionforvaccination #UnitedInProtection). *See more information, page 15.*

The EFN looks forward to continuing this close collaboration in 2025.

IV. 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. The information shared by the EFN Members strengthens EFN position statements, EFN daily lobby work with the EU institutions, and members lobby work at national level. 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, and make sure that the EU health policies reflect the nurse's reality to better shape fit-for-purpose solutions and initiatives in the healthcare sector. In 2024, the EFN collected data on the following key topics to influence the EU policy discussions and decision-making process:

✂ **Newly Registered Nurses leaving the nursing profession or not practicing nursing after graduation (April 2024)**

Many experienced nurses are leaving the nursing profession, and to make the situation even worse, less nurses are being recruited, and more and more nurses are choosing to leave the profession after only a few years from registering in the national nursing register. As this situation is extremely worrying and urgent, it must be tackled as a priority by the EU and national governments. The data collected during the EFN General Assembly in April 2024, in the Tour de Table, focused on the main reasons why newly registered nurses are not practicing nursing after graduation, or even leaving the profession, and explored EFN members views on successful strategies used in the EFN members' NNAs' countries to make nursing profession attractive for newly registered nurses. The data collected shows great variations between European countries in the percentage of newly registered nurses who are not practicing the profession after graduation and/or leaving the profession, similarities in the reasons why newly registered nurses are not practicing the profession after graduation and/or leaving the profession and why more experienced nurses choose to leave the profession. This includes, but not only, working conditions, salaries, mental health and well-being, workplace violence, workload. COVID-19 has worsened the situation for all the nurses throughout the EU and Europe. To read the report, [click here](#).

✂ **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (October 2024)**

At the EFN General Assembly, April 2024, in Brussels, the European Commission explained that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is not considered part of the minimum training requirements (Directive 2013/55/EU, Art.31), and that the education system, including CPD, falls outside the competence of the EU. The EFN Spanish member emphasised the challenge of transferring CPD credits across European countries. Currently, CPD credits earned in one country are not transferrable to another, posing a significant hurdle for some nurses. He advocated for collaborative efforts to establish an agreement or initiate discussions aimed at addressing this issue. The data collected during the EFN General Assembly in October 2024, in Poland, in the Tour de Table shows what is happening in every country. The report is being drafted and will be available on [EFN Website](#) in 2025.

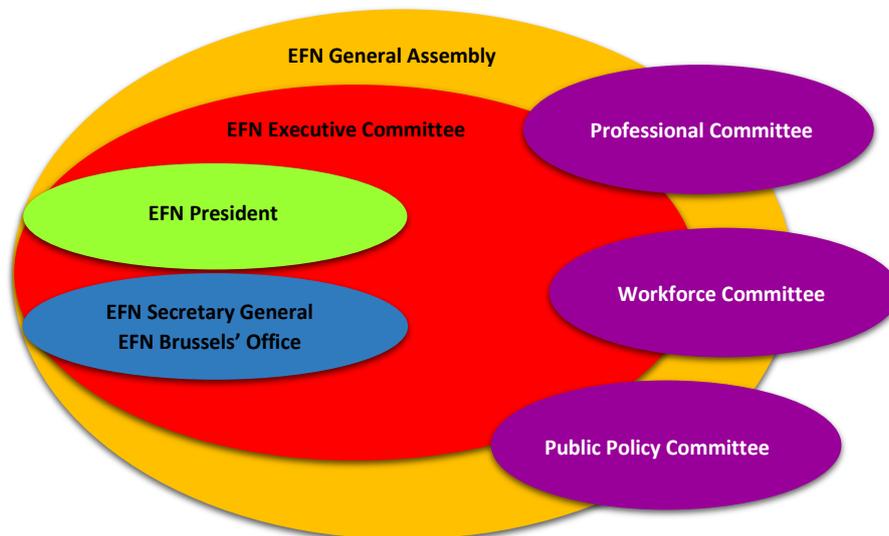
✂ **Ethical Recruitment (October 2024)**

At the last EFN General Assembly, April 2024, in Brussels, the EFN members raised concerns on the unethical recruitment practices, particularly from countries like Nepal, India, etc. The EFN members emphasised the importance of influencing politicians to address nursing recruitment and retention issues on a national level, and suggested that this topic is further discussed at future GAs, given its complexity and importance. Evidence shows that high-income countries cannot rely on international recruitment to solve national nursing shortage. The data collected during the EFN General Assembly in October 2024, in Poland, in the Tour de Table shows what is happening in every country. The report is being drafted and will be available on [EFN Website](#) in 2025.

V. 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 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, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia.
- ↳ **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 2024, the EFN Members met on 11-12 April 2024, in Brussels, for their [Spring General Assembly](#), and on 17-18 October 2024, in Warsaw (Poland), for their [Autumn General Assembly](#). The minutes of the General Assemblies are not publicly available. The EFN Members can access them via the [Members' section of EFN Website](#). In 2025, the EFN General Assembly will meet on 10-11 April 2025, in Brussels, and on 16-17 October 2025, in Ireland.

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 2024, the 3 EFN Committees (Professional, Workforce, Public Policy) discussed and approved the following key documents/topics:

- **Professional Committee:** Led by Patricia Marquis, from the Royal College of Nursing (UK), the Professional Committee discussed and approved in 2024: [EFN Policy Statement on how to get nurses education more attractive](#) (April 2024); [EFN Policy Statement on safe orientation process for newly graduated nurses](#) (April 2024); [EFN Policy Statement on Transferring CPD Credits across the EU: the recognition of hours and credits](#) (October 2024); [Advanced Practice Nurse \(APN\)](#) developments; DIR 2013/55/EU follow-up; Continuous Professional Development/Lifelong Learning; EU elections outcomes and how to strategically influence the new MEPs/Commissioners' political agenda with a specific focus on education; and [EFN Analysis of the European Semester Country Reports](#).
- **Workforce Committee:** Led by Tony Fitzpatrick, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation & Dorthe Boe Danbjørg, Danish Nurses Organisation, the Workforce Committee discussed and approved, in 2024: [EFN Policy Statement on Social Dialogue in the EU](#)(April 2024); [EFN Policy Statement on EU Nursing Workforce within a Global SSL Context](#) (April 2024); [EFN Policy Statement Co-designing the EU Health and Care Workforce Strategy](#) (October 2024); [EFN Policy Statement on Ethical Recruitment and Empowering Domestic Nursing Workforce Development](#) (October 2024); [Advanced Practice Nurse \(APN\)](#) developments; DIR 2013/55/EU follow-up; EU Health Workforce Strategy; EU elections outcomes and how to strategically influence the new MEPs/Commissioners' political agenda with a specific focus on workforce; and [EFN Analysis of the European Semester Country Reports](#).
- **Public Policy Committee:** Led by Monika Azman, from Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, the Public Policy Committee discussed and approved in 2024: [EFN Policy Statement on Nurse Prescribing in the EU](#) (April 2024); [EFN Policy Statement on HERA Future Impact on Preparedness](#) (April 2024); [EFN Policy Statement on Nurses' economic power and leadership to develop circular societies](#) (October 2024); [EFN Policy Statement on Improving frontline nurses' time for direct patient care with digitalisation and responsible AI](#) (October 2024); [Advanced Practice Nurse \(APN\)](#) developments; DIR 2013/55/EU follow-up; EU elections outcomes and how to strategically influence the new MEPs/Commissioners' political agenda with a specific focus on patient safety & quality of care; and [EFN Analysis of the European Semester Country Reports](#).

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 2024, the EFN Executive Committee met several times: on 1st February (Online) and 5 September (Online) for their regular meetings, and on 10 April 2024, in Brussels, on 29 May 2024, Online, and on 16 October 2024, in Poland, for their extraordinary meetings. In 2025, the EFN Executive Committee will meet for their regular meetings on: 3rd February and 8 September.

b. Elections

At the Autumn EFN General Assembly held on 17-18 October 2024, in Poland, the EFN members (re-)elected the following members of the EFN Executive Committee, as per EFN Constitution & Internal Regulation: **EFN Vice-President:** Patricia Marquis, Royal College of Nursing (UK) (53 votes in favour, 1 abstention) (re-elected); and **2 Members of the Executive Committee:** Zuzana Tomášková, Czech Nurses Associations (Czech Republic) (38 votes in favour) (new), and João Paulo Marques de Carvalho, Ordem dos Enfermeiros, Portugal (41 votes in favour) (new), for a two-year term 2024-2026.

As a result, the new Executive Committee is constituted as follow:



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



Vice-President: Ms Patricia Marquis, Royal College of Nursing, *UK*



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

Four Executive Committee Members:



Ms Zuzana Tomášková, Czech Nurses Association, *Czech Republic*



Ms Dorthe Boe Danbjørg, Danish Nurses Organisation, *Denmark*



Mr Tony Fitzpatrick, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, *Ireland*



Mr João Paulo Carvalho, Ordem dos Enfermeiros, *Portugal*

E. EFN BRUSSELS OFFICE

In 2024, the EFN Brussels Office, consisting of the Secretary General, the Secretary, and the Policy 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 policymaking'.

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



Manuel Ballota
EFN Policy Advisor

VI. 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 on the EFN Website: www.efn.eu

➤ EFN Website

The [EFN website](http://www.efn.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 most relevant information showing the dynamics and impact of EFN on EU policymaking.



➤ Social Media

Social media is nowadays an important tool to share and exchange information within 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, the European Commission representatives, and the nurses all over the EU, the EFN is using [Facebook](#); [Twitter](#); [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Overall, we can say that in 2024, **EFN social media campaigns reached 157,204 people from all over the world**, with a top of 103,983 people on LinkedIn, 28,378 people on Facebook, 23,724 people on Twitter, and 1,119 people on Instagram. **4116 people** interacted or reacted to it, with a top of 2,358 reactions on LinkedIn, followed by Facebook with 1,082 reactions, then Twitter with 388 reactions, and Instagram with 288 reactions. See below more details.

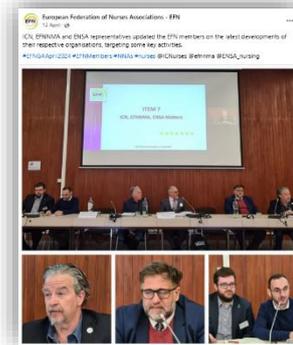
📌 EFN Facebook: /efnbrussels

The EFN Facebook account has 3,513 followers. In 2024, the EFN was quite active on Facebook, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 17/10/2024, seen by **5,452 people**, followed by the one on 12/04/2024, seen by **4,213 people**, and the one on 12/04/2024, seen by **3,297 people**.



📌 EFN Twitter: @EFNBrussels

The EFN Twitter account has currently 1,511 followers. In 2024, the EFN was quite active on Twitter, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 11/04/2024, seen by **7,284 people**, followed by the one on 12/04/2024, seen by **2,018 people**, and the one on 12/04/2024, seen by **818 people**.



📌 **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 342 followers. In 2024, the EFN was quite active on Instagram, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 17/10/2024, seen by **363 people**, followed by the one on 17/10/2024, seen by **189 people**, and the one on 17/10/2024, seen by **185 people**.



📌 **LinkedIn: @EFN - Paul De Raeve**

Finally, the EFN is using LinkedIn to publish the most relevant information. The EFN LinkedIn account has currently 16,700 followers. In 2024, the EFN was quite active on LinkedIn, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 5/02/2024, seen by **4,383 people**, followed by the one on 11/04/2024, seen by **2,545 people**, and the one on 17/10/2024, seen by **2,093 people**.



➤ EFN Update

On 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 2024, the EFN published 3 Updates: [January-February-March 2024](#); [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(I\) – April 2024](#); [EFN Biannual Update 2024 \(II\) – October 2024](#). All the EFN Updates are available at: https://efn.eu/?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. All the EFN Press Releases are available at: https://efn.eu/?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 2024, the EFN members adopted the EFN Policy Statements on: [How to get Nurses Education more Attractive \(April 2024\)](#); [Safe orientation process for newly graduated nurses \(April 2024\)](#); [Social Dialogue in the EU \(April 2024\)](#); [EU Nursing Workforce within a Global SSL Context \(April 2024\)](#); [Nurse Prescribing in the EU \(April 2024\)](#); [HERA Future Impact on Preparedness \(April 2024\)](#); [Transferring CPD Credits across the EU: the recognition of hours and credits \(October 2024\)](#); [Co-designing the EU Health and Care Workforce Strategy \(October 2024\)](#); [Ethical Recruitment and Empowering Domestic Nursing Workforce Development \(October 2024\)](#); [Nurses' economic power and leadership to develop circular societies \(October 2024\)](#); [Improving frontline nurses' time for direct patient care with digitalisation and responsible AI \(October 2024\)](#). All the EFN Policy Statements and Position Papers are available at: https://efn.eu/?page_id=833

➤ EFN inputs to the European Commission Consultation Processes

Answering European Commission consultations is a great opportunity to increase the EFN visibility and making sure the nurses' voice is heard at EU level. As such, the EFN always provides input to the European Commission consultations when seen relevant. Unfortunately, in 2024, no major EU consultations were made available for the EFN to provide input. Only a few were seen relevant to provide input to: [Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority \(HERA\) – review \(January 2024\)](#); [Open Consultation Delegated Act for the revision of the Annexe V of DIR 2013/55/EU \(January 2024\)](#); Implementation report of Directive 2005/36/EC - Survey 2024 - Professional Organisations - nurses (May 2024); [EU Climate Pact activities \(August 2024\)](#). All the EFN contributions to the European Commission consultation processes are available at: https://efn.eu/?page_id=873

➤ 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 2024, the EFN published the following articles: [Nurses Combatting Frontline Antimicrobial Resistance \(March 2024\)](#); [The Ticking Time Bomb in the European Union Exploded: The Importance of European Council Recommendations on the Healthcare Workforce \(April 2024\)](#); [Navigating the EU nursing workforce crisis: Stop talking, start acting! \(July 2024\)](#); [The European Parliament SANT Committee Own Initiative Report on EU Nursing Workforce Shortages \(December 2024\)](#). All the EFN articles are available at: https://efn.eu/?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 2024, the EFN published some Briefing Notes on key items, mostly linked to the Belgium EU Presidency: Belgium EU Presidency (08/01/2024); First informal meeting of employment and social affairs ministers (EPSCO) (12/01/2024); EP Event on EU

Workforce for Health *“Better working conditions for healthcare professionals in the EU”* (23/01/2024); OECD Declaration on resilient healthcare systems on *“Building Better Policies for More Resilient Health Systems”* (24/01/2024); EU Workforce for Health (26/01/2024); High-level Conference on Mental Health and Work (31/01/2024); EFN Critical Reflections on the Belgium EU Presidency (16/02/2024); E-health Stakeholder Group meeting on EHDS & AI (20/02/2024); AMR One Health Network (01/03/2024); Belgium EU Presidency negotiations with the European Parliament on EHDS (I) (08/03/2024); Priorities for the European Semester 2024 (13/03/2024); Belgium EU Presidency negotiations with the European Parliament on EHDS (II) (15/03/2024); Pact for Skills Forum *“Unlocking the skills potential across Europe”* (22/03/2024); High Level Summit on the Future of the European Health Union (27/03/2024); High-Level conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights - La Hulpe (17/04/2024); High-Level Conference on Health-related Needs as Drivers for Healthcare Policy and Innovation (18/04/2024); Informal EPSCO Council (24/04/2024); European Parliament’s Plenary Vote on the final text of the EHDS (24/04/2024); Vote in the European Parliament on Directive on ‘Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence’ (24/04/2024); European Year of Skills - what comes next? (30/04/2024); EFN Lobby towards EPSCO Health Working Group drafting of Council Conclusions (30/05/2024); Launch of the WHO Strategic Partners’ Initiative for Data and Digital Health (SPI-DDH) (13/06/2024); EU4Health Stakeholders’ Conference (19/06/2024); Formal EPSCO Council on Social Policy (20/06) and Health (21/06) (21/06/2024); Hungary EU Presidency - Conference on Mental Health and Triple Planetary Crisis (08/10/2024); Negotiations outcomes with WHO Europe on the EU Nursing Action Project (25/11/2024); EU Health Summit (05/12/2024).

VII. CONCLUSION

All over the world, diseases, wars and disasters have put the health of millions of citizens at risk and have placed our nurses under an enormous pressure. In these difficult times, it is crucial to understand that with the human tragedy and social and economic impact of these threats and decades of underinvestment in healthcare systems, the complex health challenges across the world make it imperative to develop innovative and accessible tools and mechanisms to analyse, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the solutions across the health and social care ecosystem.

One of the fundamental pillars to promote high quality healthcare is through a highly educated, dedicated and skilled nursing workforce. It is therefore crucial for the national governments and health systems to invest in nursing education and in a resilient nursing workforce to address the growing nursing shortage. Nurses are key contributors to the health and wellbeing of society. They are the solution to address the world's growing health care needs and inequalities, and are the best placed to apprehend the health effects of global environmental changes and related prevention/mitigation and preparedness and can play a paramount key role in this transformation, in their practice, their communities and policy decisions

With the daily risk to patient safety and the moral distress caused by an inability due to the poor working environments to deliver the quality of care, it is now impossible for nurses to stay in the profession. It is therefore key for the EU and the national governments to 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 with capacity for any unexpected crises. There is an urgent need to invest in health workforce, and more importantly in nurses.

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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