EFN POSITION PAPER
ON PATIENT SAFETY

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) represents over one million nurses and is the independent voice of the profession. The mission of EFN is to promote the interests, status and practice of the profession of nursing in the EU.

A culture of safety in healthcare systems will ensure high-quality patient care. Nurses are the largest occupational group in the EU health care sector, providing the majority of direct patient care in a wide range of settings; thus nurses can play a pivotal role in shaping and implementing policies that will increase patient safety.

EFN believes that nurses and national nurses' associations have a responsibility to work towards a open learning safety culture that encourages a safe working environment and non violent behaviour.

EFN will lobby for:

- Systematic collection of data and communication of research findings;
- An open learning culture where immediate reporting of mistakes is encouraged and incidents are communicated widely without fear of 'name and shame';
- Governments, health organisations and senior managers taking responsibility for developing a safety culture;
- Giving ownership to patients;
- Legal separation between sanctions and learning;
- The promotion of patient safety at all stages of continuous quality improvement and in every aspect of the care of patients;
- Standardisation of pharmaceutical products and equipment;
- Modules in patient safety are a core part of health education;
- Co-operation and co-ordination of strategies, research, knowledge and practice with other health care organisations; and,
- Involving decision-makers, staff, patients and patients' relatives in the work on patient safety.

EFN refers to and endorses the Position Statement of the International Council of Nurses on Patient Safety. http://www.icn.ch/pspatientsafe.htm & http://www.whpa.org/factptsafety.htm

Attention is drawn to EFN's Position Paper on The Informed Patient, the International Council of Nurses report on the "Informed Patient Project" and the Advisory Committee's "Report and Recommendations on the competencies required to take up the profession of nurse responsible for general care in the European Union" (XV/E/8481/4/97).

EFN Position Statement – 18 June 2004 (reviewed September 2007)

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