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Registration Number
NG00476.356.013

Commissioner Markos Kyprianou
European Commission
DG Health and Consumer Protection
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 22 January 2007

Concerning: EU consultation on Health Strategy

Dear Commissioner,

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation process on the EU Health Strategy. The EFN represents over one million nurses from National Nursing Associations across the European Union and aims to ensure a qualitative and equitable health service in the EU by a strategic contribution to the development of an effective, competent and motivated workforce of nurses. The EFN will support DG Sanco in its initiatives to develop and implement an EU Health Strategy. The EFN is therefore well placed to contribute to this important EU policy debate and we look forward to continuing to play an active role in this ongoing dialogue.

EFN Position

In EFN's response to the consultation on health investment in the EU (14 September 2005), the EFN members welcomed with great interest the Commission proposal for Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion, adopted on 5 July. The EFN believes that these draft guidelines will encourage Member States and regions to use the Structural Funds to invest in Health.

These structural funds are essential not only to invest in buildings but also to:

- develop European standards of care and quality control;
- develop an European workforce monitoring agency; and,
- support Continuous Professional Development for all health professionals.

The EFN emphasises that the objective of an EU Health Strategy must be to promote and ensure high quality patient care based on the common values and principles in the EU health systems as agreed by the Council of Ministers.

Furthermore, the challenges of recruitment and retention within the nursing profession need to be addressed urgently within the Health Strategy. By 2012, a high number of nurses are expected to leave Europe to work in the United States. Therefore, the EFN would want to see both public health and employees' health more clearly addressed, as these are key factors in ensuring effective and sustainable economic growth.

The EFN urges the Commission to increase the investment in human capital through better education and skills. The EFN believes that continuing professional development needs to be seen as a key strategy in encouraging nurses to stay in nursing and creative ways to assist

nurses to undertake further study needs to be exploited, for example through study leave and the reimbursement of fees and other costs of study.

Finally, systematic information is needed about nursing practice, which is featured by a diversity of patient population and variation in terms of the provision of nursing care. A real human resources policy can only be made when there is comparable data available. Therefore, Member States should be encouraged to collate accurate nursing data to be used for professional development and policy-making.

To conclude, the EFN believes that investing in social rights and health will have a beneficial effect in creating more jobs and economic growth and is a required strategy for the success of the Lisbon Agenda.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annette Kennedy".

Annette Kennedy
EFN President

