



European Federation of Nurses
Associations

EFN UPDATE

Biannual 2025 (I) – April 2025

President's Message



Dear EFN Members and Colleagues,

Since 1st January 2025, Poland has taken the rotating chair of the [Presidency of the Council of the EU](#). Coming right after the new College of European Commissioners took its seat on 1st December 2024, this is a very exciting time in Brussels, with plenty of opportunities for EFN to positively influence key EU policies and legislation for the benefit of EU and European nurses!

This is reflected in the many EU files that were launched by the European Commission in the past few months, including the [EU Action Plan for the Cybersecurity of Hospitals and Healthcare providers](#), picked up by the Polish EU Presidency. This is one of the key priorities for the EFN, as nurses frontline work will be affected when a cyberattack takes place. In addition, the Polish EU Presidency has been working towards the implementation of the [European Health Data Space \(EHDS\) Directive](#), and the review and implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#), both key policy files which the EFN has been lobbying on, and as such greatly contributed to their success.

As the work of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU continues, the EFN is already working with the Danish and the Cypriot EU Presidencies. The EFN priorities are clear: investing in the domestic EU nursing workforce is the only way to ensure the Safe-Staffing Levels which are key to patients' safety and the resiliency of the European Health systems. Without high qualified Bachelor nurses, in compliance with [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), we cannot be ready to face future health crises in the EU and Europe.

But there is more! The [European Parliament Committee on Public Health \(SANT Committee\)](#), recently promoted to a full Standing Committee, together with the [EMPL Committee](#), have picked up the healthcare workforce as their top priority for 2025 with an Own-Initiative (INI) Report on the Healthcare Workforce as priority to tackle the healthcare workforce shortages in the EU. The EFN, together with the [Standing Committee of European Doctors \(CPME\)](#) and the [Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union \(PGEU\)](#), representing together more than 5 million EU and European healthcare professionals, has worked on a joint-statement, which will be soon published, to show that we are on the same page to advance concrete and targeted actions (*the three Rs*) and no more meaningless talk!

Finally, I would like to thank all the EFN members for their commitment and numerous inputs to key questionnaires on topics such as Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), Nursing Student Mentorship, and Safe Staffing Levels, to advance the EU policy agenda supporting the nursing profession. These data are crucial to co-design EU legislation and establish a bottom-up approach to EU health policy development. The EFN members national results will be the basis for EU legislation co-design as highlighted at the EFN April General Assembly in Brussels, with the European Commission and the MEPs informing the EFN members on policies designed in DG EMPL and the European Parliament Own Initiative Report on EU Health Workforce. Therefore, EFN members endorsed key policy statements and shared their good practices on 'National/Regional/Local Cybersecurity Plans used in Hospitals and implemented by nurses'. The EFN General Assembly has shown that the EFN members are committed to EFN and as such safeguarding nurses and the nursing profession in the EU and Europe. We have so much policy window opportunities in front of us. Let's push now!

With my warmest regards,

Dr Aristides Chorattas
EFN President

News from EFN

EFN Spring General Assembly



The EFN Members met in Brussels (Belgium), in April 2025, for the 120th EFN General Assembly, where key EU policy topics, having a huge impact on nurses and the nursing profession were discussed, as: EFN Advanced Practice Nursing developments in the EU; cybersecurity; Student Mentorship and Safe Staffing Levels (in the context of WHO Nursing Action EU project); Education (DIR55); Violence Against Nurses; Digitalisation; EHDS. The EFN members were also informed on the new College of European Commissioners (2024-2029); the Polish EU Presidency, and the upcoming Danish and Cypriot EU Presidencies, Pact for Skills, and the new SANT Committee.

Taking these discussions to a next step, EFN members discussed and approved some key EFN Policy Statements, namely on '[Micro-Credentials](#)', '[Recognition of Qualifications of Third Country Nationals in line with Directive 2013/55/EU](#)', '[Zero Violence Against Nurses](#)', '[Cybersecurity](#)', '[Sustainable Application of AI and Digitalisation](#)', '[Nurse involvement in the Electronic Health Records development](#)', '[The transparent implementation of EHDS](#)'. These will support the EFN policy objectives and developments, as outlined in the [EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#), to impact the EU policy process.

The EFN also took the opportunity to collect key data on National/Regional/Local Cybersecurity Plans used in Hospitals and implemented by nurses, and on nurses' shortage. This data is key for the EFN to better influence the EU institutions with concrete outcomes/data, and to advance the EU health agenda. Investing in high quality nursing care brings a trickle down of benefits which leads to healthier societies and economic prosperity, health systems resiliency, a reduction in inequalities and an increase in social justice.

The next EFN General Assembly will take place in Dublin, on 16-17 October 2025.

Polish EU Presidency



On 1st January 2025, Poland took over the [Presidency of the Council of the EU](#) for 6 months. Its running theme is "Security, Europe!", under which Poland defined 7 pillars of Security, including Health Security. The Polish EU Presidency will focus on several key healthcare topics to strengthen the resilience of EU healthcare systems, including prevention and health promotion, the digital transformation of healthcare, cybersecurity, gender equality, social dialogue, and long-term care. The EFN welcomes the choice of these priority topics, as these have the potential to support and improve the nursing profession in the EU and Europe. In this context, the EFN participated in different high-level summits organised by or together with the Polish EU Presidency, relevant to nurses' daily work environment, as:

➤ Official launch of the WHO-EU Nursing Action in Warsaw

As key part partner in this project, which aims at improving the recruitment and retention of nurses in the EU and Europe, the EFN attended the official launch of the WHO-EU Nursing Action, that took place in partnership with the Polish EU Presidency, on 17 January 2025. In Warsaw, the EFN was represented by Dr Grazyna Wojcik (President of the Polish Nursing Association - EFN Member), who delivered a strong message on the importance of taking concrete actions to tackle the shortage of nurses in the EU and Europe. To ensure the project's success, the EFN is developing two Policy Briefs on the key topics of Nursing Students Mentorship and Safe Staffing Levels, based on data collected from the EFN Members of 35 EU Countries and a literature review conducted on both topics. These two Policy Briefs aim at providing guidance to governments and all relevant health stakeholders on how to determine and implement the most appropriate 1/ guidelines for the development of highly qualified and competent nurse teachers and clinical mentors, in line with the Directive 2013/55/EU, and 2/ Nursing Safe Staffing Levels within their unique policy and professional context.



➤ Exchange of views with Izabela Leszczyna, Polish Minister of Health, on the priorities of the Polish EU Presidency in the field of public health.



On 20 February, the Polish Health Minister had an exchange with MEPs in the new European Parliament SANT Committee. In this high-level exchange, that the EFN followed closed, the Health Minister raised the importance of the digital transformation of healthcare by ensuring appropriate funding for the implementation of the [European Health Data Space](#), as well as the importance of health promotion and prevention. The MEPs quizzed the Minister on several other topics, including antimicrobial resistance, the shortage of healthcare professionals, and the impact of climate change on public health. The Minister made it clear that SANT Committee has a key role to play in all this, including in tackling the shortage of healthcare professionals. For the EFN this is a key policy development, since we have now a Committee in the European Parliament responsible for Public Health with full legislative powers, which can bring positive outcomes for the benefit of frontline nurses and patients in the EU and Europe.

European Health Summit

The EFN President, Aristides Chorattas, was invited to the European Health Summit and asked to provide nurses' views on the rising levels of mental health and well-being issues affecting the nursing workforce, the consequences this will have on the European healthcare ecosystems, and what is needed to turn this pandemic around. Especially post-COVID-19, nurses are experiencing all the symptoms of burnout as never before. This pushes them to leave the profession – 30% left in 2023! – resulting in even more difficult working conditions for those nurses that remain, creating a vicious cycle. The EFN is a key partner in the EU Projects [BeWell](#), [KeepCaring](#), [ICUData4EU](#), and the



[EU-WHO Nursing Action](#), bringing in the nursing perspective and ensuring that the projects' deliverables support the mental health of the nursing workforce. The EFN president made it clear that to tackle the mental health issues of nurses, we must foster cross-border cooperation, sharing best practices, ensuring that the mental health issues of healthcare professionals receive the right attention. This will benefit not just healthcare professionals, but also patients and society more broadly.

Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Hadja Lahbib



On 26 February, the EFN participated in the [Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Hadja Lahbib](#) that was organised by the [DG ECHO](#) and [DG HERA](#), in which the EFN had the opportunity to [share views](#) on citizens' risk awareness, disaster and health preparedness from a youth perspective. The EFN message to the Commissioner was clear: "Youth have an important role to play in crisis preparedness, health crises and recovery efforts. Young healthcare professionals and nursing students are the future for the sustainability of the EU healthcare systems and its preparedness. We need highly educated and qualified nurses, prepared to deal with the next pandemic. The question is not anymore if there will be a pandemic, but when it will happen". Commissioner Hadja Lahbib raised that "it is key to invest in nurses to ensure preparedness. The EU Member States must do this, and the EU can support them. We all remember how we were all clapping for nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic, but now their conditions have evolved only for the worse, and this must be turned around". Nurses are the largest and the more trusted group of the healthcare professions, and they are key for preparedness. DG HERA must act now to support the development of a strong nursing workforce.

EFN involvement in EU Projects

➤ **ICUData4EU** - EFN is partner in this EU-funded [project](#) that is of crucial importance post-COVID-19, so we get better prepared in case a next health crisis comes to us! The objective of this project is to develop an ICU Data Space that aligns with users' requirements and matches with the real-world needs. To set this, the project conducted interviews with each of the partners involved in WP3 (Needs Assessment and Requirements Gathering for the European ICU Data Space) gathering the stakeholders' and the users' requirements and expectations for Secondary Data in the ICU context. The EFN, participating in this development, made it clear that the platform needs to ensure fast and reliable access to relevant data, and ease the workload of ICU healthcare professionals by providing a structured and efficient way to access and interpret shared data.



➤ **BEWELL** - [BeWell](#) project, of which the EFN is a partner of, bringing the nurses' views in the ongoing developments, has now launched free [pilot training courses](#) to help healthcare professionals to equip with essential competencies for the evolving healthcare landscape. These courses include key topics as Artificial Intelligence in healthcare, cybersecurity, data management, telemedicine, sustainability, digital and green skills (to which the EFN developed two training courses – [here](#) (digital skills) and [here](#) (green skills)). These are aimed at supporting healthcare professionals to adapt to digital transformation and green healthcare practices. Feel free to participate in these courses! Next to this, the project continues to collect your views on the current version of the future Skills Strategy, in view of developing the next version of the Strategy. Healthcare professionals, policy & decision makers, patients, students, and associations from across Europe can provide feedback on this [Online Public Consultation](#).



News from the EU

New EU Health Union Fellowship officially launched



The European Commission DG SANTE launched a new [EU Health Union Fellowship](#) on 10 February 2025, with a ceremony in Bruges, under the motto "Health Unites Us". This training program aims to unite public health experts from across the EU Member

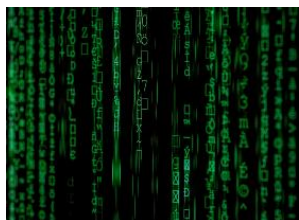
States to learn, exchange knowledge and collaborate on key health topics like digital health. Fellows, nominated by national authorities, will receive training from a team of highly experienced mentors and renowned experts. This first edition, named after RNA pioneer Katalin Karikó, runs until September 2025. It is key that EFN members influence the Ministry of Health to nominate a nurse to become fellow!!

A bolder, simpler, faster Union: the 2025 European Commission work programme

The European Commission [2025 Work Program](#), outlining its key new policy and legislative initiatives for this year, has been adopted. It is framed by the Political Guidelines and the mission letters sent by the President to each College Member. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the General Affairs' Council will establish a Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2025 and Joint Conclusions on priorities for the term. This programme does not include the Commission's ongoing work. This year's programme aims to strengthen competitiveness, security, and economic resilience in the EU. The programme is associated with a Communication on Implementation and Simplification, describing how the Commission plans to make EU rules easier to apply.



Cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers



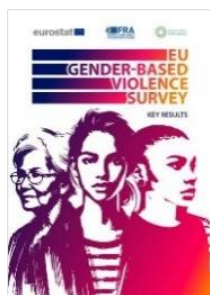
The European Commission [launched](#) a comprehensive action plan aiming to improve the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers across the EU, and , thus protecting the healthcare sector from rising cyber threats. The new action plan includes the creation of a Cybersecurity Support Centre within ENISA, providing hospitals and healthcare providers tailored support,

and develop an EU-wide cyber threat warning system by 2026. The plan also proposes a healthcare-specific response service under the [Cyber Solidarity Act](#) and promotes financial support through Cybersecurity Vouchers. However, no additional EU funding is foreseen, leaving Member States responsible for securing financial contributions. The action plan is to be reviewed by the end of 2025, and an open public consultation, ending on 30 June 2025, will inform this revision.

Publications

EU gender-based violence survey

Recently, Eurostat, FRA and EIGE published key results from the [EU Gender-based violence survey](#). The survey collected specific data about women's experiences of violence, including on the consequences of violence and contacts with different services that provide assistance to victims, as survivors of violence. The survey shows that a third of women in the EU have experienced violence at home, at work or in public. Young women report having experienced higher levels of sexual harassment at work and other forms of violence than older women. Yet violence against women often remains invisible as only every fourth woman reports incidents to the authorities (the police, or social, health or support services).



European health report 2024: keeping health high on the agenda



Published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe every 3 years, this [flagship publication](#) reports that the health of the WHO European Region's people is still negatively affected by an accumulation of threats and new hazard requiring urgent attention. The new European Programme of Work, coming into effect in 2026, will be the main policy tool for the Region aiming to address these challenges. The report was made possible thanks to the collaboration and data sharing of the Member States.

Health System Performance Assessment: European Commission publishes a report on identifying and reducing low-value care

The European Commission published a [report](#) to help the Member States tackle low-value care as part of health system reforms. Supported by the [European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies](#), the report introduces a framework of nine types of low-value care, and a list of key indicators used across countries, covering topics as: prevention, diagnostics, treatments. However, in areas such as mental health and end-of-life care, the gaps persist, with challenges in data access and data quality. The [EU's Expert Group on Health Systems Performance Assessment](#), established in 2014, supports policymakers and promotes experience-sharing. Since 2022, it has focused on strategic health system, prioritizing low-value care reduction for 2023-2024.



What do we know about young people's interest in health careers?



Health workforce shortage is a worldwide issue that is expected to get worse in the future due to population ageing. While increasing the training of new doctors and nurses could help, it will be ineffective if there is not a sufficient pool of qualified and motivated workforce. Difficult working conditions and low salary for some categories of healthcare professionals may discourage young people from pursuing careers in the sector. A [report](#) entitled "What do we know about young people's interest in health careers?", published by the OECD, analyses data on

students' interests in health sector jobs in 80 countries. The results show that the 15-year-old students' interest in health sector careers declined between 2018 and 2022 in about half of the OECD countries and several non-OECD countries.

New EU-OSHA strategy 2025-2034: protecting workers, delivering impact.

[The EU-OSHA strategy for 2025-2034](#) aims to tackle evolving occupational safety and health (OSH) challenges, focusing on [digitalisation](#), [green transition](#) and on [ageing workforce](#). The strategy includes three lines of actions: providing knowledge for policymaking, developing risk prevention tools, and raising awareness to foster a prevention culture. This will drive EU-OSHA to collaborate more with EU and [national partners](#) to enhance the agency's impact while ensuring environmental and social sustainability.



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