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Designing a European Social Pillar Think out of the box!



What do we celebrate? Rome, Maastricht? EU values? Trust?

As we mark the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, it is time to redesign EU's future, based on the EU citizens' perspective.

The 25th of March is a day of celebration for nurses, and citizens of the EU. We have come a long way since the EEC, that the Treaty of Rome established, aiming to achieve great things. Although this is a reason to celebrate and be proud of our recent past, we, citizens, should not rest here. More can be done and should be done!

Good initiatives have recently been launched, such as the European Solidarity Corps and the European Pillar of Social Rights, but it is important to make sure that the implementation of those initiatives improves the life of EU citizens and becomes more than only theories and policies. The European Pillar on Social Rights is key, and civil society should join forces and speak with one voice to get things done!

Designing the key milestones for a Triple 'A' Europe, implies supporting and listening to frontline, and putting in place concrete actions that make them work easier! Whatever sector is targeted.

As health and social care is vital for all EU citizens and population, the design needs to take up the health and social care professions' views so that citizens keep on trusting frontline. Nurses have suffered enough from the economic and austerity policies since 2008. The banking and financial problems had huge implications on the healthcare sector and healthcare professionals with patients and citizens also being victimised. With the recent election of President Trump, a lot of attention (and financial contributions), in the US but also in Europe, has been shifted towards the defence sector. The importance of this sector is of course not doubted, but the question remains: is this the solution to build a social Europe?

Therefore, time has come for Member States to expand on a more determined, ambitious and powerful social and health policy framework that leads to more wellbeing and better health

outcomes. Equal opportunities, access to the labour market, fair working conditions and sustainable social protection are definitely important, but EU Member States should work away the huge variations in too many policy areas; the entire *acquis* should be implemented by all Member States! Let's fix the *acquis* by compliance and implementation!

The EFN, therefore, calls on governments, politicians, policy-makers and stakeholders, when designing the European Pillar of Social Rights, to empower the role of health and social care professionals as a fundamental way to strengthen social rights and as such value more the contribution of the nursing workforce in enabling the EU to implement its well-known principles and values!

Nurses are the cornerstone of all health and social ecosystems supporting daily, 24h/day, the most vulnerable citizens in society, operating in the most difficult environments, even risking sometimes their own lives. Their contribution to social Europe is key. Then, we have a reason to party in the EU!

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