



EFN Policy Statement on Nurse Educators

According to the [International Council of Nurses \(2025\)](#)¹, we are currently facing a shortage of qualified nurse educators, which is having significant negative implications on the sustainability of the supply of registered nurses. Nurse educators² are responsible for educating nursing students and career nurses, serving as a cornerstone for ensuring the development of a nursing workforce that is able to meet the European population's healthcare needs, in line with the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#).

However, the shortage of nurse educators has been under-discussed and neglected, despite addressing it is crucial to tackle the nursing shortages in the EU and Europe. Therefore, the EFN firmly believes that concrete interventions to tackle the shortage of qualified nurse educators in the EU and Europe are urgently needed.

As budget cuts to nursing education, including to higher education institutions, become more frequent in the EU and Europe, and the demand for frontline nursing professionals increases, nurse educators are finding themselves under extreme pressure. Nursing schools cannot afford to recruit any more staff, despite the many qualified nurse educators who have chosen to leave the profession, the significant number of nurse educators who are due to retire, and the many nurse educators who lack university education and clinical experience, and therefore do not meet EU and European education standards. Therefore, even in cases where the number of applications for nursing education programmes have increased, the remaining nurse educators are asked to work more without getting any additional compensation and adequate recognition.

The consequences are serious: the nurse educators' workload is growing to unsustainable rates, which is leading to less job satisfaction, burnout, and therefore towards greater attrition rates. On the other hand, this is causing a deterioration in the quality of nursing education, with the ratio of nurse educators to nursing students reaching unsustainable levels, worsening attrition rates also among nursing students. As such, because of the lack of resources to recruit more nurse educators, or due to the shortage of qualified nurse educators who can provide education and training for nursing students, several nursing education programmes are forced to close

¹ ICN (2025). Education Faculty Shortage Policy Brief. Available at: <https://aio-files.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/educator+policy+brief.pdf>

² For clarity, in this Policy Statement we are referring specifically to the registered nurse in charge of independently evaluating a nursing student's progress and achievement of proficiencies in the context of a nursing education programme.

down. This, in turn is worsening the nursing shortages, as EU and European countries become less and less self-sufficient in educating and training their nursing workforce.

Despite the strong arguments in favour of investing in the nurse educator workforce, the EU Institutions and Member States are still lacking any real strategy for addressing the specific recruitment and retention challenges affecting the nurse educator workforce.

Therefore, the EFN is calling on the EU Institutions and the EU and European Member States to:

1. Recognise the crucial role played by nurse educators in the development of the future nursing workforce, which is able to meet the growing demand for nursing care in Europe, in line with the Directive 2013/55/EU.
2. At the National level, promote greater cooperation and coordination between relevant ministries, social partners and the National Nurses' Associations (NNAs) (EFN Members) in the planning of the nurse educator workforce, taking into account the long-term needs stemming from high attrition rates and the ageing workforce. Such plans should aim to:
 - a. Maintain and increase the financing for nursing programmes, including for the purpose of recruiting enough qualified nurse educators to educate and training nursing students and career nurses. Nursing education programmes should be adequately subsidised, recognising the nursing profession as critical to the safety of the wider population.
 - b. Ensure competent nurse educators in the number needed to ensure the quality and attractiveness of nursing education, and therefore to reduce attrition rates among nursing students.
 - c. Ensure fair salaries and provide adequate career progression to improve recruitment and retention of qualified nurse educators.
3. At the EU and National level, develop and implement Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Opportunities for Nurse Educators. Such CPD opportunities should:
 - a. Account for the evolving demand for nursing care, and for technological developments impacting on nursing education (such as digitalisation and AI).
 - b. Incorporate structured peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities for nurse educators, and provide greater opportunities for international collaboration for nurse educators, in line with the [Bologna Process](#),
 - c. Receive adequate financing so that nurse educators do not have to follow CPD at their own expenses.
4. At the EU level, the European Commission should unlock adequate funding by means of the [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#), the [EU4Health programme](#), and the next

[Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#), to support Member States in opening enough posts for nurse educators to be self-sufficient in educating their domestic nursing workforce.

Further readings:

- De Raeve, P. (2025) Navigating the EU nursing workforce crisis: Stop talking, start acting! Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Navigating-the-EU-nursing-workforce-crisis-July-2024.pdf>
- EFN Policy Statement on Transferring CPD Credits across the EU (2024). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-Transferring-CPD-Credits-across-the-EU-Oct.-2024.pdf>
- EFN Policy Statement on Co-designing the EU Health and Care Workforce Strategy (2024). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-EU-Workforce-Strategy-Oct.-2024.pdf>
- EFN Policy Statement on Building and Sustaining a Resilient Nursing Workforce in the EU and Europe (2022). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-Building-and-Sustaining-a-Resilient-EU-Nursing-Workforce-in-the-EU-and-Europe-April-2022.pdf>
- EFN Report on Newly Registered Nurses Leaving the Profession (2024). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EFN-Report-on-Newly-Registered-Nurses-leaving-the-profession-June-2024.pdf>
- RCN (2025) The Nurse Educator Workforce in Higher Education in England: Capacity, Challenges, and Trends. Available at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/Royal-College-Of-Nursing/Documents/Employment-and-pay/The-Nurse-Educator-Workforce-in-Higher-Education-in-England.pdf>
- Paul De Raeve*, Patricia M Davidson, Andreas Xyrichis and Pamela F Cipriano. The Ticking Time Bomb in the European Union Has Exploded: The Importance of European Council Recommendations on the Healthcare Workforce. *Iris J of Nur & Car.* 5(1): 2024. IJNC.MS.ID.000601. DOI: 10.33552/IJNC.2024.05.000601
- International Council of Nurses (2025). International Nurses Day 2025: Caring for nurses strengthens economies. Available at: https://www.icn.ch/sites/default/files/2025-04/ICN_IND2025_report_EN_A4_FINAL_0.pdf

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