



Activity Report

European Federation of Nurses' Associations
Working Year 2025



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Abbreviations

▪ AI	Artificial Intelligence
▪ AIM	International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies
▪ AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
▪ APN	Advanced Practice Nurse
▪ BeWell	(EU Project) BluePrint alliance for a future health workforce strategy on digital and green skills
▪ CESI	European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions
▪ CPD	Continuous Professional Development
▪ CPME	Standing Committee of European Doctors
▪ DG EMPL	European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
▪ DG SANTE	European Commission Directorate General for Health and Food Safety
▪ Directive 2013/55/EU	Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC & 2013/55/EU)
▪ EBN	European Biosafety Network
▪ ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
▪ EFN	European Federation of Nurses' Associations
▪ EFNNMA	European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations
▪ EHDS	European Health Data Space
▪ EHR	Electronic Health Record
▪ EMPL (Committee)	European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
▪ ENSA	European Nursing Student Association
▪ EPSU	European Federation of Public Service Unions
▪ EU	European Union
▪ EurHeCA	European Health professionals Competent Authorities
▪ HERA	European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority
▪ HOPE	European Hospital and Healthcare Federation
▪ ICN	International Council of Nurses
▪ ICUData4EU	(EU Project) Federated European Infrastructure for intensive care units' (ICU) data
▪ INI (Report)	EP Joint-Own Initiative (Report)
▪ KEEPCARING	(EU Project) Future proofing health and care systems, safeguarding healthcare professionals in hospital settings
▪ MEP(s)	Member(s) of the European Parliament
▪ MOOC	Massive Open Online Course

▪ NNA(s)	National Nurses Association(s)
▪ OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
▪ OSHA / EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
▪ PGEU	Pharmaceutical Group of European Union
▪ SANT	European Parliament Subcommittee on Public Health
▪ SOLP	EFN Strategic & Operational Lobby Plan
▪ SSL	Safe Staffing Levels
▪ WHO	World Health Organization
▪ WP(s)	Work Package(s)

Executive Summary

In 2025, the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) strengthened its leadership as a key policy actor shaping EU health and workforce policies. Guided by its [EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#), EFN focused on four main areas: workforce sustainability, nursing education, digitalisation, and patient safety and quality of care.

EFN's top political priority was the European Parliament's [Joint INI Report on 'an EU health workforce crisis plan: sustainability of healthcare systems and employment and working conditions in the healthcare sector'](#), developed by the joint SANT and EMPL Committee. EFN worked closely with Members of the European Parliament and partner organisations, as CPME, PGEU, EPSU and the European Biosafety Network (EBN), to ensure that nurses' voices were central to the report's recommendations, particularly those addressing recruitment, retention, and safe staffing levels. The [EFN Policy Brief on Safe Staffing Levels](#), developed within the WHO Nursing Action, became a key reference for EU institutions and WHO Europe.

In nursing education, EFN supported the implementation of [Directive 2013/55/EU](#) and monitored the [Commission Delegated Directive \(EU\) 2024/782](#) mandating the inclusion of digital skills in national curricula by 2026. The EFN Policy Brief on Nursing Students Mentorship, based on best practices from EFN Members and accepted by WHO Europe, will inform the WHO Nursing Action deliverables. EFN also promoted lifelong learning and professional mobility through the [EFN Policy Statement on Transferring CPD Credits across the EU - Recognition of Hours and Credits](#) (October 2024).

Within its workforce agenda, EFN continued to advocate for an EU Directive on Safe Staffing Levels under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) framework. EFN's peer-reviewed article, "[Strengthening Healthcare through Safe Staffing Levels: A European Policy Perspective on Safe Nurse-to Patient Ratios and Workforce Sustainability](#)", complemented its policy brief and joint statements, supporting calls for legally binding nurse-to-patient ratios. EFN also addressed violence against nurses, resulting in the [EFN Policy Statement on Zero Tolerance on Violence Against Nurses](#) (April 2025) and continued monitoring of the [Directive on Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#) (2024).

In digitalisation, EFN represented nurses in the [European Health Data Space](#) (EHDS) Stakeholder Group and participated in the European Commission's consultation on the [European Action Plan on the Cybersecurity of Hospitals and Healthcare Providers](#). EFN approved new EFN Policy Statements on the [the Transparent Implementation of EHDS](#), [on Nurse Involvement in the Electronic Health Record \(EHR\) Development](#), on the [Data Union Strategy](#), and [Cybersecurity](#), all highlighting the need for co-creation with end-users. The resulting EFN article, "[Integrating Nurses into Cybersecurity Governance: Assessing Preparedness in European Healthcare Systems](#)", summarised key findings from national mapping exercises.

Importantly, EFN contributed to the EU projects [BeWell](#) and [KeepCaring](#), addressing digital and green skills, resilience, and mental health within the healthcare workforce. EFN's MOOCs on Digital and Green Skills, developed within [BeWell](#), received international accreditation and high satisfaction among participants.

Additional advocacy achievements included EFN's work within the [Coalition for Vaccination](#) (co-chair), the [HERA Civil Society Forum](#), the European Commission [AMR One Health Network](#), reinforcing the profession's contribution to prevention, preparedness, and antimicrobial stewardship, and the European Commission Health Cybersecurity Advisory Board.

As a trusted EU stakeholder, EFN's evidence-based advocacy continues to influence the European health policy landscape. In 2026, EFN will build on these achievements by translating policy impact into implementation, ensuring nurses are recognised, protected, and empowered to lead the transformation of healthcare in Europe.

Impact: EFN's advocacy in 2025 positioned nurses as essential actors in shaping EU health and workforce policies. Its evidence-based work is contributing directly to advancing legislation and policy development on safe staffing levels, digitalisation, education and workforce wellbeing. Through strong alliances and recognised leadership at EU level, EFN reinforced the political visibility of nurses and set the foundation for further policy implementation and impact in 2026.

Foreword

Dear EFN Members,
Dear Colleagues,



Another year has passed, but working as a frontline nurse continues to be extremely challenging and too often ungratifying. EU and European policymakers seem to have forgotten the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on our societies, and the words of praise which they spent for the frontline nurses and allied healthcare professionals who put their lives on the line to ensure the safety of patients and citizens.

Austerity has returned to Europe, and the complex international state of affairs pushed the political narratives away from healthcare, with all the focus now going to defence and industrial development. However, this short sighted and misplaced policymaking approach is having devastating consequences for our healthcare systems, with healthcare budgets being cut, including within the European Commission proposal for the [next Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#). As such, nurses are being left unsupported, and are therefore forced to continue to leave their profession, undermining accessibility to care and the overall resilience and preparedness to crises of our societies.

Despite this, EFN and the EFN Members continued to work tirelessly to advocate for innovative, fair, and fit for purpose policies and interventions that can concretely tackle the nursing crisis. These efforts are critical and will continue throughout the coming year, or the nursing workforce will be left standing alone, losing any form of support and recognition by the authorities.

In 2025 the new European Commission became fully operational after last year's elections, which was characterised with the announcement of several new flagship initiatives which are being followed closely by EFN, ensuring the nursing representation at the highest levels of EU Policymaking. In the Council of the EU, 2025 saw the Polish Presidency of the Council (1st January - 30 June), followed by the Danish Presidency of the Council (1st July - 31 December). With the new European Parliament SANT Committee, 2025 also saw the start of the work on a new important European Parliament EMPL-SANT Joint-Own Initiative (INI) Report on 'an EU health workforce crisis plan: sustainability of healthcare systems and employment and working conditions in the healthcare sector', which the EFN is following as its top political priority. This is crucial opportunity to influence the European Commission legislative agenda for the next 5 years, and therefore EFN will continue to lobby all the key MEPs to ensure that its political priorities are fully integrated in this file. To achieve this, EFN has also built on its long-standing partnerships with other key EU-level stakeholders, including CPME, PGEU, EPSU and EBN, with which it has developed joint statements.

Through these political windows of opportunity, in 2025 EFN continued to target EU policies on violence against nurses/women, digitalisation, workforce, education, patient safety and quality of care, supporting frontline nurses while ensuring that their expertise and voice is heard by the EU Institutions. While there is still a lot of work to do, the impact of the EFN lobby work, especially in the European Parliament developments, is finally starting to show, underlining that we must continue to raise the Nurses' voice!

We really hope you will enjoy reading this EFN Activity Report, that provides an overview of the daily lobby efforts of EFN in 2025. These achievements would not be possible without our National Nursing Associations and frontline nurses' commitment, expertise, collective insights, engagement and positive support which we genuinely value and appreciate.

Looking forward to continuing our collaboration on behalf of all nurses in 2026.



Dr Aristides Chorattas
EFN President



Dr Paul De Raeve
EFN Secretary General

I. EFN KEY LOBBY PRIORITIES

The EFN continues to drive and inform European policy development and implementation within the framework of the [EFN Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan 2021-2027](#) (SOLP) that is strategically aligned to a number of important European policies and processes including, for example, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) Principles (namely principles 1 'Education'; 6 'Wages'; 16 'Healthcare'; and 18 'Long-Term Care'); - the monitoring of the [European Semester](#), in particular the [Country Specific Recommendations](#), through which the European Commission aims to support the EU Member States to achieve their commitments. In 2024, the EFN continued to build on the achievements of previous years and focused on three major key policy areas: [Education](#) (under the lead of EFN Professional Committee), [EU Workforce for Health](#) (under the lead of EFN Workforce Committee), and [Patient Safety and Quality of Care](#) including [digital health](#) (under the lead of EFN Public Policy Committee).

1. The European Parliament's EMPL-SANT Committees Joint INI Report on 'an EU health workforce crisis plan: sustainability of healthcare systems and employment and working conditions in the healthcare sector'.

In 2025, EFN's top political priority was the [European Parliament's EMPL-SANT Joint-Own Initiative \(INI\) Report on 'an EU health workforce crisis plan: sustainability of healthcare systems and employment and working conditions in the healthcare sector.'](#)

This report represents a crucial tool to demand concrete action from the European Commission to address Europe's worsening nursing shortages and workforce sustainability.

EFN played an active and influential role throughout the drafting process, ensuring that nurses' voices and priorities will be fully reflected in the final recommendations. By engaging with Members of the European Parliament's [SANT Committee](#) and [EMPL Committee](#), EFN promoted the integration of the **3Rs - Recruitment, Retention, and Resilience** - as fundamental pillars of a future EU Health Workforce Strategy.



EFN strengthened its advocacy through three key joint statements with European healthcare partners:

- **CPME-EFN-PGEU Joint-Statement on the Health Workforce INI Report** - calling for the integration of the 3Rs into the European Parliament's recommendations.
- **EPSU-EFN Joint Statement on Safe Staffing Levels** - urging the development of an EU Framework Directive on Safe Staffing Levels under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) framework.
- **EBN-EFN Joint Statement on Safe Staffing Levels and Protection from Hazardous Medicinal Products** – stressing that ensuring safe staffing levels is key to protect frontline nurses from the exposure to hazardous medicinal products.

These coordinated actions positioned EFN as a trusted partner to the SANT and EMPL Committees and strengthened its visibility as the primary advocate for nurses' interests in EU health policy. Through strategic lobbying, EFN ensured that safe staffing, professional protection, and workforce investment became central priorities in the European Parliament's political agenda.

Impact: EFN's advocacy influenced the European Parliament's INI Report, securing recognition of nurses' role in shaping a sustainable EU Health Workforce Strategy.

2. EDUCATION

➔ Directive 2013/55/EU, Annexe V

The [Directive 2013/55/EU](#) remains a key EFN policy priority. In 2025, EFN closely monitored its implementation and the update introduced by the [Commission Delegated Directive EU\) 2024/782](#), which Member States must transpose by March 2026. EFN maintained close collaboration with [DG EMPL](#), now responsible for the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive, contributing to the preparation of its implementation report. During EFN's April

2025 General Assembly, DG EMPL confirmed that most Member States support maintaining the current minimum education and training requirements for general care nurses, essential for ensuring quality and safety of care in the EU.

To strengthen its advocacy, EFN adopted two key **Policy Statements**: [EFN Policy Statement 'on Recognition of Professional Qualifications of Third Country Nationals in line with the Directive 2013/55/EU'](#), urging investment in EU nursing workforce capacity and equal education standards for third-country nurses & [EFN Policy Statement on Nurse Educators](#), calling for investment in a strong and resilient pool of qualified nurse educators to ensure high-quality nursing education. Through its [Joint-Statement with CPME and PGEU](#), EFN reiterated the need to maintain, not downgrade, minimum training requirements under Directive 2013/55/EU to safeguard quality and safety of care. Throughout 2025, EFN also participated in several EU-level meetings related to the Directive.

Furthermore, at a moment nurses worldwide are hitting their breaking point, and many are already walking away desperately from the nursing profession, the EFN [provided its solidarity](#) with the US colleagues, towards Trump Education Administration plans to remove nursing education from the categories of professional degrees leading to the inability of nursing students to get affordable nursing studies in the US. The EFN calls on the U.S. Department of Education to include again nursing in its recently revamped definition of “professional degree” programs. Nursing meets all the criteria for a professional discipline. EFN posts on this in [LinkedIn](#) reached more than 13.300 people.

➔ **Advanced Practice Nursing (APN)**

EFN continued advocating for EU-wide adoption of [Advanced Practice Nursing](#) (APN) as a way to enhance health outcomes and system resilience. Guided by the updated [EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1](#), EFN's Working Group on APN conducted a second survey across 35 countries, building on the 2021 results. Preliminary findings show increasing EU policy momentum and stronger national advocacy for formal APN recognition aligned with the Matrix 3+1.

➔ **Lifelong Learning / Continuous Professional Development**

EFN followed EU initiatives on **Lifelong Learning and CPD**, particularly within the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and the [Pact for Skills](#). As part of the [pan-European multi-stakeholder Partnership on health workforce upskilling and reskilling](#), EFN emphasised that investment in education and skills is essential for maintaining care quality and patient safety. EFN's April 2025 General Assembly adopted a [EFN Policy Statement on Micro-Credentials](#), calling for their alignment with Directive 2013/55/EU standards, limiting access to post-registration nurses, and ensuring they complement rather than replace formal education.

➔ **Mentorship**

Mentorship during clinical training, mandated by the EU Directive 2013/55/EU as half of nursing study hours, remains high on EFN's agenda. Together with CPME and PGEU, EFN urged investment in high-quality mentorship programmes within the [Joint Statement on the Health Workforce INI Report](#). In October 2025, EFN adopted a [EFN Policy Statement on 'the Union of Skills'](#), promoting investment in clinical mentorships and nurse teacher development as solutions to workforce shortages and to strengthen recruitment and retention. Additionally, EFN developed a [Policy Brief on Nursing Students Mentorship](#), within the WHO Nursing Action project, mapping best practices and literature. The Brief calls for investment in qualified clinical mentors to reduce nursing students' attrition. Accepted by WHO Europe in June 2025, its outcomes will inform final deliverables, including mentorship modules.

Impact: Through its strong engagement in EU education and workforce policy, EFN safeguarded the integrity of nursing education standards across Europe, reinforced the role of nurse educators and mentors, and advanced the political recognition of Advanced Practice Nursing as a cornerstone of a resilient EU health workforce.

3. **EU WORKFORCE FOR HEALTH**

➔ **Safe Staffing Levels**

Nursing **Safe Staffing Levels (SSL)** remain one of EFN's top policy priorities, as they provide a tangible solution to improve nurse retention and patient safety across Europe. In 2025, EFN developed a **Policy Brief on Safe Staffing Levels** within the [WHO Nursing Action](#), funded by the European Commission. Based on an academic literature review and a survey of 35 EFN Member Countries, the [Policy Brief](#), delivered in July 2025, shows a growing recognition of

SSL frameworks across Europe. However, it also highlights the urgent need for an **EU Framework Directive on Safe Staffing Levels** with stipulated nurse-to-patient ratios under the **EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)** framework, as the most concrete measure to address the nursing shortage. Building on this work, EFN published a peer-reviewed article, "[Strengthening Healthcare through Safe Staffing Levels: A European Policy Perspective on Safe Nurse-to Patient Ratios and Workforce Sustainability](#)".

EFN also strengthened advocacy through joint activities:

- A [Joint Statement with EPSU](#), urging the European Parliament to leverage the INI Report on the Health Workforce as a political opportunity to call on the European Commission to develop an EU Directive on SSL.
- The [CPME-EFN-PGEU Joint Statement](#), where the three EU-level organisations representing over 5 million healthcare professionals recognised SSL as essential for workforce retention and patient safety. To advance the debate, EFN, CPME, and PGEU met with [DG SANTE](#), emphasising the need for Commission support to develop an EU-level framework. EFN also presented research results on SSL implementation and impact to the **Health Systems Performance Assessment (HSPA)** expert group, which selected SSL as one of its 2024–2025 priorities. Among key events attended, EFN contributed to "*Health Workforce Shortages in Europe - Mapping the Way Forward*" (February 2025), organised by the German Association of Doctors, where high-level speakers, including MEPs, called for EU-level staffing standards.

Impact: Through its evidence-based advocacy and collaboration with European partners, EFN positioned Safe Staffing Levels as a cornerstone of EU health workforce sustainability, influencing both parliamentary debates and the European Commission's agenda toward a future EU framework directive.

➔ **Violence and harassment against nurses**

Violence against nurses, most of whom are women, remains a major concern across Europe. In 2025, EFN continued to raise awareness and advocate for a **zero tolerance approach** to violence and harassment against nurses. Through its **International Women's Day campaign**, EFN highlighted the alarming rates of verbal, emotional, physical and sexual violence faced by frontline nurses working in complex and high pressure environments, calling for urgent policy action at EU and national levels. EFN closely followed the implementation of the [Directive on Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#), adopted in 2024. This Directive is the first comprehensive EU legal instrument addressing violence against women both offline and online. While welcoming this milestone, EFN stressed that stronger measures are still needed to address violence specifically targeting nurses. At the **April 2025 General Assembly**, EFN adopted a [EFN Policy Statement on Zero Tolerance on Violence Against Nurses](#), urging improved legislation, prevention, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. EFN reinforced this call within the **CPME-EFN-PGEU Joint Statement on the Health Workforce INI Report**, underlining that tackling violence is essential to address nursing shortages and improve retention. Throughout 2025, EFN raised the issue in meetings with EU representatives, including **MEPs from the SANT and EMPL Committees** such as Tilly Metz (The Greens/EFA, Luxembourg), Estelle Ceulemans (S&D, Belgium) and Loucas Fourlas (EPP, Cyprus). At the **Health Workforce Shortages in Europe: Mapping the Way Forward** conference held on 18 February 2025 and organised by the German Medical Association, violence against nurses was a central topic discussed by MEPs, Commission officials and national leaders, emphasising the urgent need for coordinated EU action.

Impact: EFN's continued advocacy placed violence and harassment against nurses firmly on the EU policy agenda, linking it to workforce retention and safety, and promoting a zero tolerance culture across European healthcare systems.

➔ **Stopping Unethical International Recruitment**

In 2025, EFN continued to monitor the growing trend of international nurse recruitment, used by several EU Member States as a short term and unsustainable response to critical nursing shortages. Within the **Union of Skills** initiative launched by the European Commission in 2025, new instruments such as the **EU Talent Pool**, the **visa strategy** and the **Choose Europe** campaign were introduced to facilitate the recruitment and retention of skilled third country

professionals. EFN raised concerns that these measures risk undermining the sustainability of both EU healthcare systems, which fail to invest in domestic workforce capacity, and source countries that lose qualified professionals.

The **October 2025 EFN General Assembly** discussed and approved the [EFN Policy Statement on the Union of Skills](#), calling for strict compliance of recruited third country nurses with the education and training requirements of **Directive 2013/55/EU**, and for prioritising domestic investment in the EU nursing workforce over unethical international recruitment.

During the **April 2025 General Assembly**, EFN held a constructive dialogue with **Martin Le Vrang**, Acting Head of Unit at [DG EMPL](#) B.5, on the recruitment of third country nationals, including the **Talent Partnerships** initiative and the **EU Talent Pool**. DG EMPL expressed commitment to exploring harmonisation of EU rules on the recognition of third country qualifications, in line with Directive 2013/55/EU.

EFN participated in key meetings such as **Securing and Retaining Skilled Workers to Tackle Skills Shortages** (May 2025), organised under the **Pact for Skills**, and the **W4H 2030 Workforce Governance Seminar** (April 2025), where international migration of nurses was discussed among experts. Members were kept informed through EFN General Assemblies, [EFN Updates](#), the [EFN Website Homepage](#), and **EFN Briefing Notes** (available only to the EFN members). EFN will continue its work on this critical issue in 2026.

Impact: EFN's leadership in addressing unethical international recruitment influenced EU dialogue on workforce sustainability, ensuring that nursing mobility respects educational standards and reinforcing the need for long-term investment in Europe's own nursing capacity.

4. PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY OF CARE

↳ Vaccination

Despite the proven benefits of vaccination, Europe continues to face alarming immunisation gaps. Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as **Measles** and **Pertussis** are rising, with over 127,000 measles cases reported in 2024, half requiring hospitalisation and 38 resulting in death, while 87,000 pertussis cases were recorded in 2023, the highest since 1994. Nurses, as the largest group of healthcare professionals and key actors in community health, play an essential role in promoting vaccination, educating families, and delivering safe immunisation programmes, although their contribution often remains underrecognised.

In 2025, EFN continued to prioritise vaccination through its role as **co-chair of the [Coalition for Vaccination](#)** together with CPME and PGEU. The Coalition works to deliver accurate information, counter misinformation, and share best practices in vaccination. EFN also actively participated in the **[WHO Europe Immunisation Week Campaign](#)** held from 27 April to 3 May 2025 under the theme “*Immunisation for All is Humanly Possible.*” The EFN social media campaign reached more than 11,000 people and generated over 250 interactions, promoting the messages **#GetVaccinated** and **#NursesForVaccination**. EFN emphasised that tackling misinformation and strengthening public trust in vaccines is essential to prevent further declines in immunisation coverage. Nurses must be empowered and recognised as central to this effort. EFN will continue to contribute to this work in 2026.



Impact: EFN strengthened the visibility of nurses as leaders in vaccination, promoting accurate information, fighting misinformation, and reinforcing the essential role of nursing in achieving equitable immunisation coverage across Europe.

↳ Digitalisation

Digitalisation remains one of EFN's key political priorities. In 2025, significant EU-level developments shaped EFN's work in this area. The **[European Health Data Space \(EHDS\) Regulation](#)** entered into force on 26 March 2025, marking the start of its implementation phase. With the Commission preparing several implementing acts by 2027, EFN adopted

a [EFN Policy Statement on the Transparent Implementation of EHDS](#), calling for inclusive and transparent co-creation with EFN as the representative of end users in the forthcoming stakeholders' forum. EFN continues to actively participate in the [eHealth Stakeholder Group](#), contributing nurses' perspectives on EHDS and digital health developments.

Recognising the crucial role of nurses in health data management, EFN adopted a [EFN Policy Statement on Nurse Involvement in the Electronic Health Record \(EHR\) Development](#), urging that EHR systems meet frontline users' needs and include the [International Classification for Nursing Practice \(ICNP\)](#) for interoperability. EFN also contributed to the consultation on the forthcoming **Data Union Strategy**, adopting an [EFN Policy Statement](#) that calls for alignment between this strategy and the EHDS to avoid added administrative burden for nurses.

EFN followed the implementation of the [AI Act](#), which came into force in August 2024. To ensure that digital innovation supports patient safety and sustainability, EFN adopted a [EFN Policy Statement on Sustainable Application of AI and Digitalisation](#), stressing the importance of engaging nurses in all stages of planning and deployment of digital tools.

In 2025, EFN also addressed **Cybersecurity** as cyber-attacks increasingly disrupt nurses' daily work. The European Commission's [European Action Plan on the Cybersecurity of Hospitals and Healthcare Providers](#) was welcomed as an important step, though EFN noted that it insufficiently reflects the needs of frontline staff. Following the **April 2025 EFN Policy Statement on Cybersecurity**, EFN contributed to the Commission's consultation to strengthen the Action Plan, calling for nurse engagement in developing and implementing cyber-attack contingency plans. Data collected from EFN Members informed a peer-reviewed article titled "[Integrating Nurses into Cybersecurity Governance: Assessing Preparedness in European Healthcare Systems](#)".

Throughout 2025, EFN participated in major digitalisation events, including **A Roadmap for Ethical AI in Healthcare** (25 March 2025), the **Data Union Stakeholders Consultation** (15 May 2025), and organised the [EFN Symposium on Digitalisation and AI](#) at the ICN Congress (12 June 2025). EFN also contributed to several **EHDS informal stakeholder meetings**, ensuring that nurses' perspectives are integrated into policy development.

EFN will continue to advance nurses' engagement in the co-design of digital health tools through EU projects such as [BeWell](#), [KeepCaring](#), and [ICUData4EU](#), ensuring that technology supports nurses in their daily practice.

Impact: EFN positioned nurses as key contributors to the digital transformation of healthcare, ensuring their active involvement in the European Health Data Space, Artificial Intelligence, and Cybersecurity agendas, while promoting safe, ethical, and user-centred digital innovation across Europe.

↪ **Planetary Health/Climate**

Climate change is already causing severe public health consequences, with an increasing number of natural disasters directly linked to environmental degradation. Nurses play a crucial role in building preparedness and resilience to these challenges. Through their care and patient education, they promote behavioural and lifestyle changes that contribute to healthier and more sustainable societies. At the **April 2025 General Assembly**, EFN adopted the [EFN Policy Statement on Sustainable Application of AI and Digitalisation](#), highlighting the importance of integrating environmental sustainability and ethical principles into digital health innovation. At the **October 2025 General Assembly in Dublin**, EFN adopted the [EFN Policy Statement on the Key Role of Nurses for Preparedness](#), which underscores nurses' essential contribution to crisis response, including climate-related emergencies.

Furthermore, ahead of the interinstitutional negotiations on the EU's climate ambition beyond 2030, health sector organisations, representing healthcare professionals (including EFN), patients, and public health experts from across the EU, [sent a joint letter](#) to the EU decision makers negotiating in the trilogue, calling for decisive, domestic EU climate mitigation to prevent disease and reduce cost, and to place people's health at the centre.

Impact: EFN strengthened the recognition of nurses as key actors in planetary health, promoting their involvement in sustainable healthcare transformation and climate crisis preparedness at both EU and national levels.

5. OTHER KEY POLITICAL TOPICS EFN LOBBIED ON

a. HERA Civil Society Forum

In 2025, EFN renewed its membership in the [HERA Civil Society Forum](#), which connects the [European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority](#) (HERA) with key stakeholders. EFN took part in the [Youth Policy Dialogue](#) with Commissioner Hadja Lahbib, sharing nursing perspectives on disaster and health preparedness. Building on this, EFN published the article “[The European Health Systems Preparedness - Nurses' Youth Voice Input to European Commission](#)” calling for stronger coordination among EU preparedness initiatives and greater investment in the nursing workforce. At the **October 2025 General Assembly**, EFN adopted the [Policy Statement on the Key Role of Nurses for Preparedness](#), stressing that EU crisis readiness depends on a well-prepared and resilient nursing workforce.



b. EU Pact for Skills

EFN continued its active engagement in the [EU Pact for Skills](#), a flagship initiative to strengthen upskilling and reskilling, particularly in green and digital competences. As a key partner in the [BeWell](#) project, EFN contributed to the development of a European [Green Skills](#) and [Digital Skills](#) strategy and piloted two training courses for nurses and allied professionals, which received excellent feedback. EFN also plays a leading role in the [Large-Scale Partnership for the Health Ecosystem](#), ensuring that all training and skills initiatives reflect the real needs of frontline nurses. EFN will continue this work in 2026 to advance lifelong learning opportunities in healthcare.

c. Antimicrobial Resistance

Antimicrobial resistance remains high on EFN's policy agenda. The [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) estimates that antibiotic-resistant infections cause about 35,000 deaths annually in the EU. In 2025, EFN continued its active role in the **European Commission One Health AMR Network**, contributing to dialogue, sharing best practices and supporting accelerated national action. EFN also participated in the [European Antimicrobial Awareness Day](#) campaign (18 November 2025), using its communication channels to raise awareness among EU policymakers, stakeholders and the public about the critical role of nurses in antimicrobial stewardship.

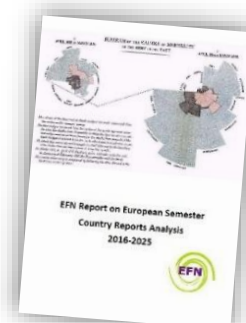


d. Mental Health

Mental health continues to be a priority for EFN, as the nursing workforce faces severe burnout and distress, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2025, EFN participated in multiple EU-level meetings and bilateral discussions with MEPs within the **Health Workforce INI Report** context, calling for concrete EU and national action. EFN's work within the [EU Project KeepCaring](#) entered its second year, focusing on key deliverables as the development of a Change Management Platform (CMP) for healthcare professionals, which will include a psychoeducational online course to enhance coping skills among healthcare professionals. EFN also [welcomed](#) findings from the **WHO Europe report on healthcare professionals' mental health**, which revealed alarming data: 10 percent of doctors and nurses reported suicidal thoughts. EFN will continue to use this evidence to advocate for urgent mental health action across Europe.

e. EU Semester 2025

The [2025 European Semester Country Reports](#) highlight that healthcare workforce shortages significantly impact the EU's competitiveness and accessibility of care. EFN analysed these reports, focusing on health expenditure, nursing workforce status, and implementation of **Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs)**. While progress remains limited, EFN's long-term lobbying has led to an important breakthrough: for the first time, the European Commission and Eurostat now use data that specifically refer to *practising nurses* compliant with **Directive 2013/55/EU**. This change will enable more accurate policy development and strengthen evidence-based advocacy at national level.



Impact: EFN strengthened its leadership role in EU health policymaking, advancing nurses' visibility across diverse agendas from preparedness and digital transformation to workforce development, antimicrobial resistance and mental health, ensuring that nurses remain central to shaping a resilient, safe and sustainable European healthcare system.

6. OTHER EU LOBBY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EFN

In 2025, EFN continued to seize new opportunities to represent nurses' interests at EU level. Key events included:

- WHO-EFNNMA-EFN-ENSA webinar on “European Nursing and Midwifery: Charting Progress and Addressing Challenges”, on 6 May 2025, where EFN presented its work on safe staffing levels as a key retention tool.
- ‘[Student Nurses' Voices Speaker Series](#)’ hosted by the [Nightingale Initiative for Global Health \(NIGH\)](#), on 13 May 2025, where EFN presented its activities on high-quality mentorship and provided space for student nurses from the EFN Nursing Students' Forum to share their experiences.
- **Stakeholder consultation meeting on the European Parliament's EMPL and SANT Committees joint Own-initiative report (INI)** “An EU health workforce crisis plan: sustainability of healthcare systems and employment and working conditions in the healthcare sector”, organised by MEP Tilly Metz and MEP Ohisalo, on 21 May 2025, to gather EU Stakeholders views, including EFN, on some of the key elements to be addressed in the INI Report. EFN raised the shortage of nurses and the need for more nurses at the bedside. We need it now! And that the INI report starting point needs to be Safe Staffing Levels, knowing that this is in place already in 13 EU Member States.
- **ICN 2025 Congress**, held in Helsinki, on 07-13 June, where the EFN had the opportunity to organise an [EFN Symposium on Digitalisation](#), that showed how frontline nurses are helping to design digital tools and AI that meet their frontline needs in daily clinical practice, and explored how EU legislation supports the frontline deployment of safe and fit-for-purpose digital tools, as well as the upskilling and reskilling of the nursing workforce, to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving digital landscape, helping nurses to stay at the centre of the digital transition.
- **11th eHealth Stakeholder Group Plenary Meeting**, held on 26 September 2025, where the European Commission presented the outcomes of the consultation on the Action Plan for the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers. EFN was invited to give a presentation on Cybersecurity, including the results of the mapping of the EFN Member States good practices collected by EFN in April 2025 and the [EFN article 'Integrating Nurses into Cybersecurity Governance: Assessing Preparedness in European Healthcare Systems'](#) resulting from this mapping.
- **8th FOHNEU International Congress**, with a focus on occupational health, hosted by the Irish Nurses & Midwives Organisation (INMO), EFN member, on 2-3 October 2025, in Cork (Ireland), on the theme “Leading the Change”. The EFN was invited to provide an overview on the role of EFN in leading and advocating for nurses on work and occupational health related issues, highlighting the need for legislation recognising unsafe staffing levels as occupational hazard for healthcare professionals and as a general risk for patients' safety and health.
- **CESI meeting on 'Tackling EU healthcare workforce shortages with the European Pillar of Social Rights'**, on 18 November 2025, where EFN provided nurses' views on the European Parliament report on ‘EU health workforce crisis plan: sustainability of healthcare systems and employment and working conditions in the healthcare sector’.
- **eHSG Webinar on 'The Future of AI in Health'**, on 25 November 2025, that discussed new policy initiatives on AI in health and provide an opportunity to exchange views on future directions for research, deployment, and uptake of AI in the health sector.
- **WHO-EFNNMA-EFN webinar 'From Policy to Practice: Elevating Nursing and Midwifery Prescribing in Europe'**, on 03 December 2025, where EFN, represented by Wendy Preston (RCN and lead of EFN working group on APN), presented the work done within EFN on APN and Nurse prescribing.

7. EFN MEMBERS' LOBBY OPPORTUNITIES

Maintaining close cooperation with EFN Members remains a central pillar of EFN's work. Engaging directly with National Nurses Associations (NNAs) at national, regional and local events allows EFN to understand key issues at stake in Member States and to provide an EU-level perspective that supports their advocacy. These interactions strengthen the collective voice of European nurses and help bring national concerns to EU policymakers.

↳ Supporting letters

One of the keyways EFN assists its members is through **supporting letters** addressing national challenges such as workforce shortages, poor working conditions and attempts to downgrade the nursing profession. EFN continuously reminds governments that nurses are essential for sustainable healthcare systems and that their rights and professional standards must be safeguarded. EFN also emphasises the importance of compliance with [Directive 2013/55/EU](#) and the **Proportionality Directive (2018/958)**, which requires governments to engage in structured dialogue with stakeholders to co-design fair and safe working environments for nurses.

↳ EFN Members visiting Brussels and the EU Institutions

Visits from NNAs to Brussels provide members with valuable opportunities to meet their national EU representatives, learn about EFN's political agenda, and understand how EU policies influence nursing practice and education. During these visits, EFN highlights its main lobbying priorities, including the **Directive 2013/55/EU**, challenges in nursing education, EU projects, and the importance of continued engagement in the EU policymaking process. These visits raise the visibility and credibility of the nursing profession and show the strong commitment of EFN Members to advancing nursing policy in Europe.

↳ Participation in EFN Members' national events

In 2025, EFN continued to support members by participating in national events, where the EFN highlighted its EU Lobby Strategy & Priorities at EU level, including EU projects the EFN is currently involved in, how nurses united voice leads to concrete results when lobbying the EU, the need to work closely with the EU institutions to ensure that the health workforce stays high in the European Commission's political agenda, and the perspectives and the new trends in EU Nursing for the 21st century. These include :

- **15th Congress of Nursing and Midwifery Care of Slovenia**, hosted by the Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, in Brdo (Slovenia), on 8-9 May 2025.
- **Nurses' session "From Care to Leadership: The Transformation of the Nursing Profession in a Person-Centred System"**, organised by the Latvian Nurses Association, on 14 June 2025 on the occasion of the 10th Latvian Doctors' Congress, in Latvia.
- **Italian National Nurses Association (CNAI) event "Standing with citizens. Standing with health. Strategies for the Future of nursing and Healthcare"** on 11 July 2025, at the Senate of Republic, in Rome; and on 7 November 2025, on Nursing Assistant Complaint to the EU, where the EFN stressed the need to protect the professional title of "nurse", in line with Directive 2013/55/EU, to maintain the attractiveness and integrity of the nursing profession and to ensure safe and adequate patient care.
- **14th SEEMF Congress**, held on 3-8 September.2025, in Burgas (Bulgaria), in collaboration with the Bulgarian Association of Health Professionals in Nursing, gathering 150 nurses' leaders from all over the country.
- **ANFIIDE (France NNA) Roundtable on "The integration of nurses into health policy: a role to be filled at national and international level"**, on the occasion of the Nursing Forum, held on 02 December 2025, in Paris.



Impact: EFN reinforced the active participation of its members in EU policymaking by supporting national advocacy, facilitating direct dialogue with EU institutions, and strengthening the European nursing community's collective influence on health and workforce policies. EFN insights are seen as key in guiding policymakers and healthcare professionals towards a more sustainable and equitable healthcare system in Europe.

A. BEWELL - BLUEPRINT ALLIANCE FOR A FUTURE HEALTH WORKFORCE STRATEGY ON DIGITAL AND GREEN SKILLS



The [BeWell project](#), launched on 1 July 2022 and co-funded by the [Erasmus+ programme](#) (Grant Agreement No 101056563), is a four-year initiative that aims to develop a comprehensive **European strategy for upskilling and reskilling the health workforce** in digital and green competences. The project seeks to address skill mismatches, strengthen professional capacities and ensure that healthcare professionals are better prepared to face future challenges in an evolving societal and technological context.

BeWell builds an alliance of European healthcare stakeholders committed to creating and implementing a sustainable **green and digital skills strategy** for the health ecosystem. This strategy is designed for application at local, regional, national and EU levels through the [Pact for Skills](#). The project develops innovative curricula and training programmes for students and healthcare professionals.

EFN plays an active role across several **Work Packages (WPs)**, particularly in **WP3**, which focuses on developing the skills strategy based on the mapping of existing initiatives. EFN also contributes to the **exploitation plan** and supports dissemination and communication activities under **WP9**, leveraging its extensive network of 3 million nurses in the EU and 6 million across Europe. Through this engagement, EFN ensures that the strategy and training modules reflect the real needs of frontline nurses and healthcare professionals.

Consortium: [European Health Management Association \(EHMA\)](#), [ECHAAlliance \(ECHA\)](#), [EuroHealthNet](#), [Nuove Tecnologie della Vita Academy \(ITS\)](#), [Comite Europeen de coordination des industries radiologiques et d'informatique de Sante AISBL \(COCIR\)](#), [EIT Health EV](#), [University of Thessaly \(UTH\)](#), [European Health Telematics Association \(EHTel\)](#), [Euromasc AS](#), [Wiener Institut für Arbeitsmarkt - und Bildungsforschung \(WIAB\)](#), [European Regional and Local Health Authorities ASBL \(EUREGHA\)](#), [Stichting Nederlands Instituut voor Onderzoek Van de Gezondheidszorg \(NIVEL\)](#), [DATEY Eyrich GMBH \(DATEY\)](#), [Universitatea Babes Bolyai \(UBB\)](#), [Università degli Studi di Bergamo \(UNIBG\)](#), [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), [European Specialist Nurses organisation \(ESNO\)](#), [Cesi International \(CESI\)](#), [European Forum for Primary Care \(EFPC\)](#), [Pharmaceutical Group of the EU \(PGEU\)](#), [Medical University of Varna \(MU-Varna\)](#), [Biomedical Alliance in Europe \(BioMed Alliance\)](#), [INNLANDET FYLKESKOMMUNE \(FagInn\)](#), [European Federation of Nurses Associations \(EFN\)](#).

» Project Meetings

Throughout 2025, EFN participated in the project **monthly Work Packages' meetings**, contributing with nursing expertise and ensuring that frontline perspectives were integrated into the project's development. EFN will continue to provide this input in 2026.

The **BeWell Winter General Assembly**, held online on 14 January 2025, provided an opportunity for partners to review progress and address upcoming challenges, particularly the accreditation of the BeWell Online Training Programmes. Drawing on its experience in obtaining **International Continuing Nursing Education Credits (ICNECs)** for both the Digital and Green Skills MOOCs, EFN shared practical guidance to support the accreditation process.

At the **Fourth General Assembly**, held on 18-19 June 2025 in Varna (Bulgaria), Wps' leads presented the latest project outcomes, including results from the second pilot of the [BeWell Learning Platform](#). The EFN MOOCs on Digital and Green Skills attracted the highest participation rates and received highly positive feedback for their relevance, accessibility and practical value for healthcare professionals. The consortium also explored opportunities for future collaboration through a potential "BeWell 2.0" project to continue advancing the initiative.

» Deliverables

Key project outputs developed and/or consolidated in 2025 include:

- **BeWell Skills Strategy (Version 2 to be published in 2026 at the end of the project)**, available in nine languages, refined through an [Open Public Consultation](#) to gather the views of the healthcare professionals. This Skills

Strategy is aiming to guide policymakers in the planning of fit-for purpose upskilling and reskilling initiatives at EU, National, Regional, and Local levels, to ensure that they will benefit both the healthcare professionals and patients.

- [BeWell Learning Platform](#), offering accredited training programs/courses (MOOCs) on digital and green skills, including two EFN-developed courses that received outstanding evaluations.
- [BeWell Skills Monitor](#), that provides an overview of upskilling and reskilling possibilities to empower the digitalisation and ecologicalisation of the health and care sector
- [BeWell Competence Matrices](#), outlining the essential learning outcomes (competence, skills, and knowledge) that learners must acquire across various sectors.
- [Large-Scale Partnership for the Health Ecosystem](#), established under the Pact for Skills with 54 signatories, including EFN, to support the twin transition to a green and digital economy.

Impact: Through its active involvement in BeWell, EFN ensured that nurses' voices shaped the EU's green and digital skills strategy, promoting accredited, high-quality and practice-oriented training. EFN's leadership helped position nurses as key actors in Europe's health workforce transformation, supporting resilience, sustainability and innovation across healthcare systems.

B. [KEEPCARING - FUTURE PROOFING HEALTH AND CARE SYSTEMS, SAFEGUARDING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN HOSPITAL SETTINGS](#)



The [KEEPCARING](#) project, launched on 1 July 2024 and co-funded by the **Horizon Europe Programme** (Grant Agreement No 101137244), is a four-year initiative designed to **strengthen the wellbeing and resilience of healthcare professionals in hospital settings**, improve onboarding processes and support long-term workforce retention.

The project aims to identify new factors influencing resilience, job resources and stress among healthcare professionals and students; empower teams in surgical pathways through evidence-based and digital tools; support hospital organisations in adopting inclusive workforce strategies; and develop a **data-driven AI prediction model** integrated into an online **Change Management Platform (CMP)** to forecast which interventions most effectively build a resilient hospital workforce.

EFN is actively engaged in several **Work Packages**, including **WP4**, focused on co-work design to reduce burnout and increase engagement, and **WP5**, dedicated to fostering change management in hospital organisations. Within WP5, EFN contributes to developing a **psychoeducational online course** for healthcare professionals working in surgical wards, aimed at strengthening coping skills and resilience through active learning. EFN also contributes to dissemination efforts under **WP6**, ensuring strong communication across Europe through its network of over 3 million nurses in the EU and 6 million across Europe.

Consortium: [Amsterdam University Medical Centers \(AMC\)](#), [University of Limerick \(UL\)](#), [Nuromedia GmbH \(NURO\)](#), [Erasmus University Rotterdam \(EUR\)](#), [European Connected Health Alliance \(ECHA\)](#), [Chino Srl \(CHINO\)](#), [University of Warwick \(UoW\)](#), [Zealand University Denmark \(RegioZ\)](#), [Inland Norway University \(INN\)](#), [The National Research Council of Italy \(CNR\)](#), [University of Coimbra \(UoC\)](#), [University of Tartu \(UoT\)](#), [University of York \(UoY\)](#), [Healthy Mind \(HM\)](#), [NOVA University of Lisbon \(NOVA\)](#), [University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf \(UKE\)](#), [The National Hospital of Denmark \(RIGS\)](#), [European Hospital and Healthcare Federation \(HOPE\)](#), [European Union of Medical Specialists \(UEMS\)](#), [European Federation of Nurses Associations \(EFN\)](#).

» [Project Meetings](#)

In 2025, EFN participated in the project **monthly** Work Packages' meetings, providing nursing expertise and ensuring that the project reflects frontline realities.

As a member of the Executive Board, EFN contributes to the coordination of the project deliverables and strategic planning, bringing nurses' views and expertise in a more proactive way to the project. EFN participated in all the Executive Board meetings.

At the Third KeepCaring General Assembly, held on 2–3 October 2025 in Hamburg, consortium partners reviewed progress and next steps in developing and testing the CMP and related interventions. EFN brought nurses' views into the discussions and outcomes of the meeting.

» **Deliverables**

Key project outputs developed in 2025 include:

- **Ongoing studies:**
 - **Study A** - data collection on preliminary results of the surveys on resilience, conducted in Denmark, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands.
 - **Study B** - developed the VR intervention with the study on its effects on resilience expected to be start in Q1 2026.
 - **Study C** - engaging nurses working in surgical wards to see if they would be willing to test the VR for deep relaxation.
 - **Study D** - team debriefing supported by black box rooms recordings of the OR.
 - **Study E** - diary study to test prosocial job crafting in nursing teams as a way to improve workflow and resilience.
 - **Study F** - study on toxic leadership to support iWORK.comp intervention.
- Ongoing development of the **Change Management Platform**, aiming to be an interactive tool that will include the results of the studies and the training material that healthcare professionals can use.

***Impact:** Through its active involvement in KeepCaring, EFN positioned nurses at the centre of European efforts to strengthen mental health, wellbeing and resilience in hospital settings. By integrating nurses' perspectives into evidence-based and digital interventions, EFN contributes to building supportive and sustainable healthcare environments across Europe.*

C. **ICUDATA4EU - FEDERATED EUROPEAN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INTENSIVE CARE UNITS' (ICU) DATA**



The ICUData4EU project, funded under the **Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL)** (Grant Agreement No 101168169), is a 3.5-year EU initiative aimed at establishing a **pan-European federated infrastructure for Intensive Care Units' (ICU) data**, combined with robust governance mechanisms that allow secure cross-border access to ICU datasets. Building on existing networks and infrastructures, the project addresses critical challenges faced by ICUs, including the ageing population, staff shortages and preparedness for future crises such as pandemics or conflicts.

Supported by the [EU Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), the project contributes to the objectives of the [Digital Europe programme](#), promoting the deployment of sectoral data spaces based on secure, energy-efficient federated cloud-to-edge systems. It also supports the wider EU goals of advancing **artificial intelligence, interoperability, cybersecurity, trust and digital skills**, while aiming to create a "Data Space for ICU Data" that will be fully interoperable with the [European Health Data Space \(EHDS\)](#).

EFN is involved in **WP3 (Needs Assessment and Requirements Gathering for the European ICU Data Space)**, ensuring that end-users needs and perspective are fully taken into account in the development of the ICU data sharing platform and **WP8 (Validation, Pilot Testing and Dissemination)**, providing expertise on communication, dissemination and workforce-related aspects. EFN also validates the platform's usability for simulation and analysis tools, ensuring it supports nurses and other frontline professionals in clinical decision-making and digital competence development.

Consortium: [Universitaetsklinikum Aachen](#); [Clinomic Solutions GmbH](#); [Krankenhaus Duren GEM. GmbH](#); [Information Technology for Translational Medicine \(ITTM\) SA](#); [PNED GIE \(LNDS\)](#); [Secretaria Regional da saude](#); [Université de Liège](#); [Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft Österreichische Vereinigung Zur Forderung Der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung](#); [Medizinische Universitaet Wien](#); [Panepistimio Ioanninon](#); [Panepistimiako Geniko Nosokomeio Irakleiou](#); [Idryma Technologias Kai Erevnas](#); [Spitalul Clinic de Boli Infectioase](#); [Spitalul Clinic Municipal Cluj-Napoca](#); [Paula Stradina Kliniska](#)

[Universitates Slimnica](#); [European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care AISBL](#); [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#); and [Fraunhofer Gesellschaft Zur Forderung Der Angewandten Forschung EV](#).

» **Project Meetings**

In 2025, EFN participated in several project meetings, including:

- **ICUData4EU Consortium Webinar**, on 2 September 2025, which aimed to align partners on project goals and progress in developing the ICU data-sharing platform. EFN contributed as the end-user representative, ensuring that the system is designed to meet clinical needs and improve data interoperability.
- **Second General Assembly**, held on 23–24 October 2025, Cluj, Romania, where partners discussed the project technical progress, pilot activities and dissemination strategies.
- In the project **WP3 monthly meetings** that started in November 2025, where the developments of the primary use case scenarios for the ICUData4EU platform were discussed and next steps agreed.

» **Deliverables**

Key project outputs developed in 2025 include:

- **Data management plan**
- All the **communication & dissemination tools**, including the project Website that provides an overview on the project, its developments, and key news. Visit: <https://www.icudata4eu.com/>
- **End-Users Requirements** collected to build the actual infrastructure of the ICU Data Sharing Platform – these will continue to expand throughout the projects' lifetime, especially taking into account that the EHDS is still developing. The survey and interviews conducted include EFN input.
- **First version of the ICU data sharing platform** - that will be developed as final deliverable of the project (WP3)
- **Design and Development of the Decentralised Data Sharing Platform** – with a first piloting done.

***Impact:** EFN's engagement in ICUData4EU ensures that nurses' needs and perspectives are fully represented in the development of Europe's digital health infrastructure. By supporting a secure and interoperable ICU data ecosystem, EFN contributes to advancing evidence-based care, workforce digital readiness and the integration of nursing practice into the future European Health Data Space.*

D. WHO EU NURSING ACTION



The [EU Nursing Action](#) is a three-year project financed by the **European Commission** through the [EU4Health programme](#), designed to support EU Member States in improving the recruitment and retention of nurses, in line with the **WHO Framework for Action on the Health and Care Workforce**. The project currently covers 20 Member States: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

As a key partner, **EFN** played an important role in 2025 by collecting **good practices from Member States on Safe Staffing Levels** and on **Nursing Students' Mentorship**, and by conducting two academic literature reviews. These inputs led to the development of **two Policy Briefs**, both accepted by **WHO Europe in July 2025**, that will be integrated into the main deliverables of the Nursing Action Project, which include:

- National recruitment and retention action plans
- Mentorship programmes to attract and retain new nurses
- Workforce impact assessments addressing structural shortages
- Strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of nurses
- Training initiatives enabling the workforce to benefit from digital transformation

In addition to EFN, other key partners include [European Federation of Public Service Unions](#) (EPSU), [European Nursing Students Association](#) (ENSA) and the European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNMA), together with National Focal Points, most of whom are Chief Government Nursing Officers (CGNOs). This collaborative effort provides an important opportunity to shape effective EU policies that strengthen the nursing workforce and ensure sustainable recruitment and retention strategies across Europe.

» **Project Meetings**

In 2025, EFN actively participated in project coordination activities, including:

- **Monthly Social Partners Meetings**, which enabled continuous exchange of updates and feedback, as well as the in-person meeting held on 5–6 May 2025 in Brussels.
- **The Joint Meeting of Social Partners and National Focal Points (CGNOs)**, held on 4–5 June 2025 at the UN City in Copenhagen, where EFN presented the results of its Policy Briefs and collected feedback from Member State representatives.

» **Deliverables**

From an EFN perspective, the outputs developed in 2025 include:

- [EFN Policy Brief on Safe Staffing Levels](#) (July 2025)
- [EFN Policy Brief on Nursing Student Mentorship](#) (July 2025)

Impact: EFN's leadership within the WHO EU Nursing Action helped translate nursing workforce challenges into evidence-based EU policy solutions. By combining Member State data, academic evidence and frontline nursing perspectives, EFN contributed to shaping sustainable recruitment and retention strategies, reinforcing nurses' wellbeing, and advancing the resilience of Europe's health systems.

EFN DISSEMINATION ON THE PROJECTS

The dissemination activities are key for EU projects, taking advantage of the networks of all the partners in the consortium, leading to reach out specific targeted and wider audiences. This is particularly relevant for the activities addressed to policy-oriented and exploitation targets. As such, EFN has been active in over the year in disseminating these EU projects latest developments and deliverables across EFN members, EU-related events, EFN Website, and EFN social media, ensuring strong projects' visibility at EU level.

In 2025, EFN presented these projects ongoing developments and outcomes:

- **To EFN members at the EFN General Assemblies** (April and October 2025) and **Executive Committee meetings** (February and September 2025).
- **To EU policy makers at meetings with the European Commission and MEPs**, including discussions with DG SANTE and European Parliament members on health workforce topics.
- **To EFN EU Stakeholders network at EU stakeholders' events.**
- Through **EFN Updates**, highlighting the projects and their developments in both the [April](#) and [October](#) 2025 biannual Editions).
- Through **EFN social media** (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn (@EFNBrussels)), with EFN regularly sharing on the projects, which posts reach thousands of users and generate significant engagement.
- Through **EFN website** that includes a **dedicated section** on each project ([BeWell](#); [KEEPCARING](#); [ICUData4EU](#); [WHO Nursing Action](#)), regularly updated with the projects' milestones, and **news** featured on the EFN website [homepage](#) - e.g.: "[EFN Meeting post-grad nurses at the University of Hasselt](#)" (4 November 2025); "[EFN at the ICUData4EU Project General Assembly in Cluj-Napoca, Romania](#)" (24 October 2025); "[EFN members meeting in Dublin for the 121st EFN General Assembly](#)" (17 October 2025); "[EFN attended KEEPCARING General Assembly in Hamburg](#)" (3 October 2025); "[KEEPCARING EU Project](#)" (28 July 2025); "[ICUData4EU EU Project](#)" (25 July 2025); "[BeWell EU Project](#)" (23 July 2025); "[EFN Symposium "Digitalisation of EU health care systems: upskilling and reskilling the EU nursing workforce for sustainable and resilient health care systems"](#)" (12 June 2025); "[Official launch of the WHO-EU Nursing Action Project in Warsaw, in partnership with the Polish EU Presidency](#)" (17 January 2025).

III. BUILDING ALLIANCES

Building alliances with key organisations remains a central EFN priority, as partnerships strengthen civil society participation in EU policymaking and contribute to effective outcomes at both European and national levels. In 2025, EFN continued to reinforce its long-standing collaborations with major EU stakeholders, professional bodies and international organisations working on shared priorities such as **education, workforce sustainability, patient safety, digitalisation and quality of care**.

➤ Sectorial Professions' Organisations

For two decades, EFN has maintained close collaboration with Brussels-based professional associations, including the **Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU)**, **Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)**, **Council of European Dentists (CED)** and **European Midwives Association (EMA)**. Together, these organisations advance joint positions on EU legislation, education standards and patient safety.

➤ Strategic Partnerships with EU Agencies and Stakeholders

In 2025, EFN continued its active engagement with key EU-level bodies:

- 1) [EU-OSHA](#), as an official [Safe and healthy work in the digital age](#) campaign partner of *Healthy Workplaces 2023–2025*, to promote safe and healthy working conditions in the digital age.
- 2) [ECDC](#), through participation in the [European Antibiotic Awareness Day](#) and cooperation on Antimicrobial Resistance initiatives.
- 3) [CESI](#), advocating for improved employment conditions and workforce protection, and as a partner in the *BeWell* project.
- 4) [HOPE](#), promoting patient safety, education, digitalisation and workforce mobility through ongoing EU project collaboration.
- 5) [EPSU](#), jointly advocating for EU legislation on *Safe Staffing Levels* within the EMPL–SANT Health Workforce Report.
- 6) [AIM](#), cooperating on workforce and access to quality healthcare.
- 7) [OECD](#), contributing nurses' perspectives to workforce policy discussions.
- 8) [EurHeCA](#), engaging with competent authorities on implementing *Directive 2013/55/EU*, particularly regarding mobility and recognition of professional qualifications.

➤ Global and International Cooperation

EFN continued to strengthen its partnership with the **International Council of Nurses (ICN)** through participation in the [ICN Congress 2025](#) in Helsinki and ongoing policy coordination. Collaboration with [WHO Europe](#) remained strong, including the *WHO EU Nursing Action* project, *WHO mental health survey*, and *WHO-EFN-EFNMA meeting series* supporting the [Nursing and Midwifery WHO Euro Roadmap](#). EFN also joined the [European Immunisation Week 2025 campaign](#) (#EIW2025).

Impact: Through its extensive partnerships, EFN ensured that nurses' expertise and priorities were represented in all major EU and international health policy forums. These alliances amplified EFN's influence in shaping EU and global health strategies on workforce sustainability, education, digitalisation and patient safety.

IV. EFN DATA COLLECTION

Collecting **quantitative and qualitative data** remains a central component of EFN's evidence-based lobbying strategy. Through surveys, email consultations and the **Tour de Table** discussions held during General Assemblies, EFN gathers up-to-date national data that supports both EU and national-level advocacy. The evidence collected informs EFN policy statements and provides the European Commission, Parliament and Council with reliable information reflecting nurses' realities across Europe.

In 2025, EFN collected data on several key topics to influence EU policy discussions:

» **Cybersecurity Preparedness in Healthcare (April 2025)**

Following the launch of the [European Action Plan on the Cybersecurity of Hospitals and Healthcare Providers](#), EFN gathered data from Member States on the existence and implementation of national, regional and local cybersecurity plans. The results revealed significant disparities in preparedness and limited nurse involvement in cybersecurity planning. These findings were shared with the European Commission to inform the revision of the Action Plan, ensuring stronger inclusion of the nursing perspective.

» **Registered Nurse Shortages (April 2025)**

To support its advocacy on workforce sustainability, EFN collected updated national data on nursing shortages. The findings show that nearly all EU and European countries are facing critical shortfalls, with an **average gap of 41,450 nurses per country according to governments**, compared to **79,436 reported by National Nurses Associations (NNAs)**. While governments project a need for 17,000 nurses per country to meet future demands, NNAs estimate that over **700,000 nurses are already missing today**. This evidence provides a strong foundation for EFN's call for concrete EU and national action to address the crisis.

» **Nursing Student Development and Engagement (October 2025)**

At the October 2025 General Assembly, EFN initiated data collection on nursing student engagement within NNAs, as part of a new **EFN Working Group**. The aim is to analyse how national associations involve students in professional structures and identify best practices for strengthening student representation and leadership pathways.

» **NNAs' National Key Concerns (April and October 2025)**

Throughout 2025, EFN used the Tour de Table to gather Member States' main concerns. Common priorities included the need for digital skills training, integration of internationally educated nurses, workforce mental health, and persistent staffing shortages. These findings continue to guide EFN's advocacy focus and coordination with EU institutions.

Impact: Through systematic and participatory data collection, EFN ensures that EU policy discussions are informed by nurses' real-world experiences and national evidence. This approach strengthens EFN's role as the authoritative voice for Europe's nursing workforce and enhances the credibility of its advocacy at both EU and national levels.

V. EFN GOVERNANCE

A. EFN STRUCTURE

The EFN governance structure consists of the General Assembly, which includes 38 National Nurses' Associations, supported by the Executive Committee, the Professional, Workforce and Public Policy Committees, and the EFN Brussels Office.

B. EFN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As the EFN governing body, the General Assembly meets twice a year to discuss the important issues related to the EFN lobby work that can influence the nurses and the nursing profession at EU and national levels, to discuss and endorse key Policy Statements, and to work on several EU projects.

The EFN General Assembly is constituted by:

- ↳ **Members** - drawn from the [National Nurses' Associations](#) from the twenty-seven EU Member States + Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, UK, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Moldova.
- ↳ **Observers** - International Council of Nurses ([ICN](#)); World Health Organisation ([WHO](#)); and the European Nursing Students Association (ENSA).

To view the full list of the EFN Members, updated on regular basis, please visit the [EFN Website](#).

In 2025, the EFN Members met on 10-11 April 2025, in Brussels, for their [Spring General Assembly](#), and on 16-17 October 2025, in Dublin (Ireland), for their [Autumn General Assembly](#). The minutes of the General Assemblies are not publicly available. The EFN Members can access them via the [Members' section of EFN Website](#). In 2026, the EFN General Assembly will meet on 16-17 April 2026, in Cyprus, and on 15-16 October 2026, in Austria.

C. EFN COMMITTEES

Constituted in 2006, in order to prepare and facilitate the EFN lobby process towards the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers (EU Presidency), the three EFN Committees meet twice a year during the EFN General Assemblies in order to discuss and produce recommendations to the General Assembly on the steps forward to achieve concrete outcomes related to specific issues.

- **Professional Committee:** Led by Zuzana Tomášková, Czech Nurses Association, it focuses on topics related to Education (as Directive 2013/55/EU follow-up; Continuous Professional Development/Lifelong Learning; Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) developments; ...)
- **Workforce Committee:** Led by Tony Fitzpatrick, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation & Dorthe Boe Danbjørg, Danish Nurses Organisation, it focuses on topics related to Workforce (as EU Health Workforce; Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) developments; Violence Against Nurses; Cybersecurity; Safe Staffing Levels; Preparedness; Long-Term Care;).
- **Public Policy Committee:** Led by João Paulo Carvalho, Ordem dos Enfermeiros (Portugal), it focuses on EFN policy agenda topics that do not fall under the 2 first Committees (as Digitalisation & AI; EHDS; EU Multiannual Financial Framework; climate; ...).

D. EFN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The EFN Executive Committee is constituted by seven members: President, Vice-president, Treasurer and four delegates (See [here](#)) elected by the EFN Members National Nurses' Associations. They meet at least twice a year (in between each General Assembly) to discuss key issues for the EFN, to prepare recommendations for the General Assembly, and to follow-up on the General Assembly decisions. An extraordinary Executive Committee meeting usually takes place the day before each General Assembly to set up the last recommendations for the meeting, and anytime needed to take any urgent decision or discuss a key topic.

a. Meetings

In 2025, the EFN Executive Committee met several times: on 3 February (Online) and 8 September (Brussels) for their regular meetings, and on 9 April, in Brussels, on 15 October, in Ireland, and on 10 December, Online, for their extraordinary meetings. In 2026, the EFN Executive Committee will meet for their regular meetings on: 2 February and 8 September.

b. Elections

At the Autumn EFN General Assembly held on 16-17 October 2025, in Ireland, the EFN members (re-)elected the following members of the EFN Executive Committee, as per EFN [Constitution](#) & [Internal Regulation](#), for a two-year term 2025-2027: EFN President: Aristides Chorattas, Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association (re-elected); EFN Treasurer: Anita Prelec, Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia (New); and 2 Members of the Executive Committee for a two-year term 2025-2027: Dorthe Boe Danbjorg (Danish Nurses Organisation) (re-elected); Tony Fitzpatrick (Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation) (re-elected).

E. EFN BRUSSELS OFFICE

In 2025, the EFN Brussels Office, consisting of the Secretary General, the Secretary, and the Project & Policy Advisor, supported by consultants in the area of Accounting, Social Security System, Web and IT management, Legal Affairs and on specific policy areas, especially during the EFN General Assemblies, continued focussing on implementing the [EFN Strategic Lobby Plan 2021-2027](#). Having an EFN Office in Brussels equipped with highly educated and motivated staff, and empowering members to exchange views on specific EU policy areas, thus enabling them to go back home with the capacity to influence national governments is, in fact, the 'raison d'être' of EFN.

VI. COMMUNICATION

For the EFN, it is essential that its members have the necessary information, knowledge and experience to take informed decisions on the key issues related to the nursing profession, not only during the EFN General Assemblies, but also when an item is being discussed and/or needs urgent attention, decision and/or action. In order to be as reactive and proactive as possible, the EFN Brussels Office regularly provides the EFN members with up-to-date information on the most recent items discussed at EU level, through updates, briefing notes, press releases, position statements, and articles. Most of these documents are made available to the public on the EFN Website: www.efn.eu

EFN Website

The [EFN website](http://www.efn.eu) is used as a key communication channel to disseminate information to the EFN members, the EU health stakeholders, key decision-makers, and the public in general. Updated on regular basis, the EFN Website reflects the EFN on-going activities and most relevant information showing the dynamics and impact of EFN on EU policymaking.

Social Media

Social media is nowadays an important tool to share and exchange information within the EU lobby arena. In order to be more visible in the social media network and to get EFN messages closer to the European stakeholders, the MEPs, the European Commission representatives, and the nurses all over the EU, the EFN is using [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/efnbrussels); [Twitter](https://twitter.com/EFNBrussels); [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/efn_brussels) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/efn-brussels).

Overall, in 2025, **EFN social media campaigns reached 147,223 people from all over the world**, with a top of 74,036 people on Facebook, 62,076 people on LinkedIn, 9,869 people on Instagram, and 1,242 people on Twitter. **3,896 people interacted or reacted to it**, with a top of 1,973 reactions on Facebook, 1,433 reactions on LinkedIn, followed by Instagram with 392 reactions, then Twitter with 98 reactions.

See below more details:

EFN Facebook: [/efnbrussels](https://www.facebook.com/efnbrussels)

The EFN Facebook account has 3,613 followers. In 2025, the EFN was quite active on Facebook, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 11/05/2025, seen by **12,728 people**, followed by the one on 17/10/2025, seen by **7,157 people**, and the one on 17/01/2025, seen by **4,868 people**.

EFN Twitter: [@EFNBrussels](https://twitter.com/EFNBrussels)

The EFN Twitter account has currently 1,448 followers. In 2025, the EFN was quite active on Twitter, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 11/05/2025, seen by **553 people**, followed by the one on 01/05/2025, seen by **396 people**, and the one on 08/03/2025, seen by **299 people**.

EFN Instagram: [@efn_brussels](https://www.instagram.com/efn_brussels)

The EFN Instagram account has currently 380 followers. In 2025, the EFN was quite active on Instagram, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 16/10/2025, seen by **1,145 people**, followed by the one on 11/04/2025, seen by **800 people**, and the one on 12/05/2025, seen by **602 people**.

LinkedIn: [@EFN - Paul De Raeve](https://www.linkedin.com/company/efn-brussels)

Finally, the EFN LinkedIn account has currently 18,000 followers. In 2025, the EFN was quite active on LinkedIn, with many posts published, with a **top of views** reached with the one published on 11/05/2025, seen by **1,690 people**, followed by the one on 17/01/2025, seen by **1,562 people**, and the one on 12/06/2025, seen by **1,217 people**.



➤ EFN Update

On regular basis, when significant lobby information is available, the EFN publishes its Update, a newsletter that makes reference to the main information for nurses and the nursing profession within the European Union and to the key issues to influence the European Institutions. These 'Updates' keep the EFN Members and other key EU health alliances informed about the EFN policies, actions and relevant EU initiatives. In 2025, the EFN published 2 Updates: [EFN Biannual Update 2025 \(I\) - April 2025](#); [EFN Biannual Update 2025 \(II\) - October 2025](#). All the EFN Updates are available at: https://efn.eu/?page_id=875



➤ EFN Press Releases

Another approach that the EFN is using to communicate with the EU lobby arena is through its press releases. The EFN Press Releases provide the EFN members and other key EU health actors, with information on key topics that the EFN believes are important to share, at a crucial moment. These are seen as a good way to reaffirm EFN views/position on a particular topic next to the EU Institutions and the EU stakeholders. All the EFN Press Releases are available at: https://efn.eu/?page_id=882

➤ EFN Policy Statements

The EFN Policy Statements, highlighting the EFN members views on specific issues, and approved by the EFN General Assembly, are crucial for the EFN's lobby work next to the different EU Institutions and EU Stakeholders, and to support the EFN Members in their daily lobby work at national and EU level. All the EFN Policy Statements are available at: https://efn.eu/?page_id=833

➤ EFN inputs to the European Commission Consultation Processes

Answering European Commission consultations is a great opportunity to increase the EFN visibility and making sure the nurses' voice is heard at EU level. As such, the EFN always provides input to the European Commission consultations when seen relevant. Unfortunately, in 2025, no major EU consultations were made available for the EFN to provide input. Only a few were seen relevant to provide input to: [EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises](#) (February 2025); [Next MFF: Implementing EU funding with Member States and regions](#) (March 2025); [Action Plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers](#) (April 2025); [Skills Portability Initiative](#) (December 2025). All the EFN contributions to the European Commission consultation processes are available at: https://efn.eu/?page_id=873

➤ EFN Articles

Publishing articles is a good way for the EFN to increase the visibility of nurses and the nursing profession at European level, to strengthen the EFN's position on a range of key policy issues, and to increase the impact of the EFN messages and their potential influence on the policy design. In 2025, the EFN published the following articles: [Integrating Nurses into Cybersecurity Governance: Assessing Preparedness in European Healthcare Systems](#) (June 2025); [The European Health System Preparedness - Nurses' Youth Voice Input to European Commission](#) (July 2025); [Strengthening Healthcare through Safe Staffing Levels](#) (July 2025); [Frontline Perspectives and Emerging Solutions for Strengthening Healthcare Workforce Well-being](#) (December 2025). All the EFN articles are available at: https://efn.eu/?page_id=2258

➤ EFN Briefing Notes

The EFN Briefing Notes, available only to the EFN members via email and/or the [members' section](#) of EFN Website, are another way the EFN uses to provide specific information on key lobby topics that may influence the EFN members' national policies and daily lobby work. In 2025, the EFN published some Briefing Notes on key items, as on the new European Parliament SANT Committee; WHO Europe report Health workforce migration in the WHO European region; and the European Parliament's Joint EMPL-SANT Own-Initiative (INI) Report on EU health workforce.

VII. CONCLUSION

Over the last years, there has been growing discussion about the need to tackle the nursing shortages, and several initiatives have been launched on topics including upskilling and reskilling, the impact of AI and digitalisation on workflows, mental wellbeing, among others. However, the reality is that nothing has changed at the frontline yet. There are many projects, initiatives, and publications, but nurses continue to leave the profession in large numbers as these initiatives do not lead to concrete improvements to their working conditions, work-life balance, salaries, and professional recognition. This is unacceptable.

EFN will therefore continue in 2026 to lobby the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the EU, to promote policies centred on ensuring the self-sufficiency of the EU Member States in educating and training their nursing workforce. Furthermore, EFN will continue to call on the European Commission to urgently develop EU legislation on safe staffing levels, and on zero-tolerance to violence against healthcare professionals, which must be implemented by the Member States to keep nurses in the profession. These Directives would fall under Occupational Health and Safety (OSH), on which the EU has already developed more than 20 individual Directives. This is crucial to improve the working conditions of nurses, the quality and safety of patients' care, and to build a resilient healthcare workforce that is prepared for the next health and civic crisis. Moreover, EFN will keep on reminding policymakers that the subsidiarity argument cannot stand as a justification anymore!

Finally, it is important to continue lobbying for ensuring that the European Commission and the Member States look at investing in the health workforce as a long-term investment in European Stability, and not just an added cost. Ensuring the resilience and preparedness of the nursing workforce is key from a defence, security and preparedness perspective, and therefore EU funding for the healthcare workforce must be protected from austerity measures! EU and National policymakers must not forget that healthcare systems and preparedness for any crisis are inextricably linked, and our healthcare systems depend on the resilience of our nursing workforce. EFN will therefore continue working tirelessly in 2026 to raise the voice of the nursing workforce in the EU and Europe!

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) was established in 1971. The EFN represents over 38 National Nurses Associations, and its work has an effect on the daily work of 3 million nurses throughout the European Union and 6 million in Europe. The EFN is the independent voice of the nursing profession, and its mission is to strengthen the status and practice of the profession of nursing for the benefit of the health of the citizens and the interests of nurses in the EU and Europe.

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