

INVESTING THE NURSES' DIGITAL AND GREEN SKILLS IS INVESTING IN POPULATIONS' WELL-BEING

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The resilience of the nursing workforce can no longer be addressed without considering the EU's digitalisation agenda and the growing importance of planetary health. Strengthening capacity and investing in digital and green skills for citizens, patients and healthcare professionals are key to ensuring a sustainable and transformed healthcare sector, in which frontline nurses have a central role to play.

General, Specialist and Advanced Practice Nurses (APN) need digital and green skills to plan, organise and implement nursing care, to empower individuals, families and groups, to give advice, instruct and support those needing care, to evaluate nursing care and analyse care quality, and to comprehensively communicate with society on health outcomes. The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) therefore supports the implementation of Directive 2013/55/EU,¹ which outlines eight nursing competencies linked to e-health and planetary health, and the Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2024/782,² mandating the inclusion of digital skills in national general care nurses curricula by 2026.

Knowing that nurses are natural healthcare innovators at the frontline of care, they can contribute to addressing three key elements of the transformation of health ecosystems: building trust, promoting user-centred innovation and ensuring an appropriate collection and use of primary and secondary data to improve care delivery and innovation. This is also why, as key frontline end-users, nurses must be involved in the co-design of new

digital and green health tools and the policies that will shape these innovations/developments.

The EU institutions should therefore enhance nurses' ability to shape and deliver effective and efficient EU policies that positively impact EU citizens. In this regard the nurses' voice³ should stand as a pillar of the development and implementation of key initiatives under the Union of Skills, such as the European Skills Portability Initiative, which aims to streamline the recognition of skills and qualifications across the EU in line with Directive 2013/55/EU, including via the promotion of digital credentials.

At the same time, EU and European healthcare systems are undergoing important reforms which are closely linked with digital and green skills, including the development of "New Models of Care". In this regard, it is fundamental for nurses to be transparently included in this process through co-creation, as frontline exploitation and implementation will, in large part, depend on the nurses' consent and acceptance.

Nurses, through their relentless commitment, expertise, professionalism, bravery, and care for our most vulnerable, preserve millions of lives daily and provide comfort and dignified care at the end of life. Investing in nursing is an investment in the health and well-being of EU citizens and the sustainability of EU healthcare systems. It is therefore very important and relevant that the EU integrates the nurses' voice in digital and planetary health policymaking and

considers the high contribution that nurses and other health professionals could bring to its implementation and exploitation.

References

- ¹ Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, Official Journal of the European Union L 354, 28.12.2013, pp. 132–170. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2013/55/oj/eng>
- ² Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2024/782 of 4 March 2024 amending Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the minimum training requirements for the profession of nurse responsible for general care, Official Journal of the European Union L, 2024/782, 5.3.2024. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir_del/2024/782
- ³ EFN. EFN Policy Statement on the Union of Skills. Brussels: EFN, October 2025. <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-the-Union-of-Skills-October-2025.pdf>