



## EFN Policy Statement on Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) Harmonisation in the EU and Europe

In 2021 and in 2025, the EFN mapped, through the EFN Members, the development and recognition of Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) in the EU and Europe. The findings revealed that since 2021, most EFN Member States are moving towards APN regulation and recognition at the educational level and in professional practice. This movement towards harmonisation is led by the EFN Members' national lobby and advocacy work, in line with the [EFN APN implementation toolkit](#) and the [EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1](#).

Currently, APN is established in 17 countries, and officially regulated in 11 EU and European Countries: Belgium, Estonia, France, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Netherlands. These countries established minimum requirements for practice, education, and scope of responsibility. Beyond these countries, educational programs exist and graduates are entering the workforce, but the legal and professional framework governing practice is still evolving. Among the 17 countries with established APN roles, the vast majority require a master's degree, and there is great convergence on the APN competency requirements, including education, leadership, research, autonomous practice and health promotion.

Furthermore, the most EU and European countries are following the ICN Definition of APN: *"An Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) is one who has acquired, through additional education, the expert knowledge base, complex decision-making skills and clinical competencies for expanded nursing practice, the characteristics of which are shaped by the context in which they are credentialed to practice"* ([ICN report on APN, 2020](#))

At the same time, at EU level there is growing recognition towards the added value of APN, with the European Parliament EMPL-SANT Own-Initiative Report (INI) on the Health Workforce strongly supporting a harmonised development and implementation of APN within the EU. Furthermore, through the Skills Portability Initiative Action 2, the Commission DG EMPL is now exploring new candidates for EU Common Training Frameworks (CTF) to expand the pool of regulated professions in the EU, and APN, with 11 countries regulating APN, already fulfils the minimum requirements for a CTF within the EU.

Therefore, the EFN is calling on the EU Institutions to:

- Develop an EU Common Training Framework for Advanced Practice Nurses, as an annex to the Directive 2005/36/EC, amended by Directive 2013/55/EU, to enable intra-EU mobility of Advanced Practice Nurses within the participating countries. Importantly, such a CTF would further enable the regulation, national and international comparison, cooperation in research and development and sharing of expertise to other EU and European countries, thus ensuring a wider implementation of APN for the benefit of patients', citizens, and communities.
- Implement the recommendations of the European Parliament INI Report on the Health Workforce, especially with regards to facilitating the exchange of best practices regarding national regulations on funding and payment systems that ensure quality, safety, accountability, fair compensation and recognition of advanced nursing roles.

At the same time, the EFN calls on EU and European Member States to:

- Advance in the national-level adoption, recognition, and regulation of Advanced Practice Nursing in line with the principles defined in the [EFN APN Implementation Toolkit](#) and in the [EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1](#).
- Develop adequately funded, high-quality master's level programmes for Advanced Practice Nursing education
- Enable APNs to work autonomously, to their full scope of education and practice, with remuneration commensurate for their advanced practice role and responsibilities.

***\*Note: EFN is using the ICN definition of a nurse:***

*A nurse is a professional who is educated in the scientific knowledge, skills and philosophy of nursing, and regulated to practice nursing based on established standards of practice and ethical codes. Nurses enhance health literacy, promote health, prevent illness, protect patient safety, alleviate suffering, facilitate recovery and adaptation, and uphold dignity throughout life and at end of life. They work autonomously and collaboratively across settings to improve health, through advocacy, evidence-informed decision-making, and culturally safe, therapeutic relationships. Nurses provide people-centred, compassionate clinical and social care, manage services, enhance health systems, advance public and population health, and foster safe and sustainable environments. Nurses lead, educate, research, advocate, innovate and shape policy to improve health outcomes.*

*Further, nurses play a unique role in health and care for populations of all ages, and in all settings, building trust with individuals, families and communities and gaining valuable insights into people's experiences of health and illness. Building on a foundation of personalized direct and social care, nurses advance their capabilities through ongoing education, research and exploration of best practices.*

*A nurse's scope of practice is defined by their level of education, experience, competency, professional standards and lawful authority. They play a key role in the coordination, supervision of, and delegation to others who may assist in the provision of health care.*

*Often at the front line, they respond to disasters, conflicts and emergencies, demonstrating courage, dedication, adaptability and commitment to the health of individuals, communities and the environment.*

***(ICN, 2025)***

**Further readings:**

- EFN Policy Statement on EU Advanced Practice Nursing (April 2022). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-APN-April-2022.pdf>

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