



EFN POSITION PAPER ON RECRUITMENT

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) represents over one million nurses and is the independent voice of the profession. The mission of EFN is to promote the interests, status and practice of the profession of nursing in the EU.

EFN would like to bring to the attention of the EU, the current critical shortage of nurses, the actual and potential problems of competitive recruitment for scarce nursing resources and the need for an EU ethical stance in relation to nurse recruitment.

There has been EU legislation guaranteeing the right of free movement to nurses responsible for general care since 1977. This legislation was based on a set of minimum standards of education for such nurses. Enlargement of the EU, the Single European Market, and increased level of skills and education among nurses in Eastern European Countries will increase the movement of nurses from one country to another. However, there is a current worldwide shortage of nurses and there is a need for an EU ethical stance regarding competitive nurse recruitment.

EFN is concerned that:

- Some recruitment agencies have unethical practices and migrant nurses may be exploited. EFN proposes that the EU adopt the ICN Recruitment Principles "Ethical Nurse Recruitment Framework";
- Many countries have no benchmarks exist to measure the nursing resource requirements to meet health service demands - it may prove difficult to assess if they have a surplus or a shortage of nurses. Consequently, these countries may be exploited by recruitment agencies depleting them of their most experienced nursing resources which may lead to a deterioration of their health service;
- Free movement of nurses and the rights of the individual to make free choices should be supported. The new EU Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on recognition of professional qualifications (COM (2002)119 final) should guarantee and protect free movement of nurses.

EFN calls for:

- A Workforce Monitoring Forum to be set up at EU level to capture information about the movement of nurses within Europe in order to make predictions for future trends.
- The EU to work in collaboration with NNAs to undertake a workforce study that would address the current crisis in relation to the recruitment and retention of nurses in Europe.

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