



EFN PRESS RELEASE

Lives of Europe's 6 Million Nurses at Risk!

Brussels, Thursday 6 July '06

European Parliament calls for urgent legislative measures

On 6 July 2006, in Strasbourg, **the European Parliament voted in favour (465 votes in favour, 18 against) of a resolution calling for legislative measures to protect healthcare workers from potentially fatal blood borne infections**, such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, caused by occupational injuries with contaminated needles.

In excess of 1 million needlestick injuries occur in Europe each year. As well as the very real physical risk, vast numbers of healthcare workers and their families face months of uncertainty and unacceptable emotional anguish following a needlestick injury, not knowing if they will acquire a life-threatening infection or not.

Annette Kennedy (President of the EFN) commented:

"We sincerely thank the European Parliament for their initiative to protect Europe's 6 million healthcare workers from these totally unacceptable occupational risks. This small amendment to Directive 2000/54 can have a big impact on the safety and peace of mind of nurses and other healthcare workers across Europe, and can help make this a more attractive profession."

Paul De Raeve (Secretary General of the EFN) commented:

"EFN urges the European Commission to urgently and positively respond to this Parliament Resolution, which is intended to protect all of Europe's healthcare workers. These risks exist in all areas of the hospital, and also in other healthcare situations. As well as nurses, many other healthcare workers are at risk, including doctors, support staff, cleaners, laundry workers, emergency services and laboratory workers. It is generally acknowledged that the applicable worker safety directive has failed to protect healthcare workers and therefore it must be urgently improved. The lives of Europe's 6 million nurses are at stake."

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