



PRESS RELEASE

Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU (PCN) & Gamian Europe

NURSES SAFETY & WORKING CONDITIONS

It is with extreme concern that the Standing Committee of Nurses of the European Union (PCN) was informed of the recent drama occurred in a Psychiatric hospital in Pau, France. The murder of our two colleagues, Chantal Klimaszweski, nurse, and Lucette Gariod, nursing auxiliary, savagely killed in their working place, on Friday 17 December 2004 during the night, as they were on call.

PCN offers its sincere condolences to the two victims' family, their friends and to all the staff working in their unit and the entire psychiatric hospital.

This double unspeakable crime, of a horrifying barbarism reveals the growing insecurity in our health care centers. The PCN member for France, ANFIIDE, has been denouncing for several years the degradation of conditions of employment and the dangers which the various professional categories in the psychiatric sector face.

Nurses are the most at risk of violence, 24 hours a day. PCN believes that the development and implementation of National and European policies need to safeguard the nurses' right to a safe work environment, and that employers, governments and the nursing profession should develop together policy frameworks which guarantee the security of nurses and all healthcare professions, which are in the first line to provide care to patients.

Moreover, to maintain the quality of care in our health care facilities, we must improve nurses' working conditions, which have deteriorated over the last decade. The nursing profession is experiencing an increased workload in their daily working life and nursing shortages are present all over Europe. The health care system in the Member States is not adapted to nurses and patients needs. PCN is calling for European legislation that protects patients and nurses in order to guarantee that accidents and murders, like this atrocity occurred in France, don't happen again.

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The Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU (PCN) was established in 1971. PCN represents over one million nurses and is the independent voice of the profession. Members consist of national nurses' associations from the twenty-five EU Member States. Associate Members are drawn from nursing associations in countries which are members of the Council of Europe. The mission of PCN is to safeguard the status and practice of the profession of nursing and the interests of nurses in the EU and Europe.

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GAMIAN-Europe (Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks) is a pan European patient driven organisation assisting people affected by mental illness, either as a sufferer or as a carer. The objectives of Gamian Europe are to raise the profile and importance of mental illnesses among members of the European Parliament and the European Commission, to provide advice, information and support to enable member organisations to provide and improve upon the services that they offer to their own members, and to develop working relationships with health professionals within the mental health field.

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