



European Federation of Nurses
Associations

EFN UPDATE

January-February 2013

President's message



Dear EFN Members and Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to wish you all a happy new year. I really hope that you have had a peaceful time with your family and that you are ready to contribute to a year of successful lobby work for nurses and nursing.

The EFN Executive Committee will meet in Brussels on 17th of January for its first meeting of the year and we will use this opportunity to meet key European Commission representatives, to stress important key issues EFN is following closely, such as the compromise agreement on the Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (Directive 2005/36/EC), the Irish EU Presidency, the EU workforce for health and the role of the EU Skills Council for Nursing and Social Care in this development and last but not least, the EU e-Health Action Plan and the impact of nurses and nursing within this policy domain.

In terms of lobbying, the EFN will participate in some important events in January. First we have the 2nd Patient Safety and Quality of Care (PaSQ) project coordination meeting in Berlin on 14-15 January, where the first deliverables of the several work packages will be discussed, followed by the vote in the European Parliament Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee on MEP Bernadette Vergnaud's report on the modernisation of Directive 36. 24th of January, EFN members from Finland and Norway, together with the president and vice-president of the European Nursing Students (ENSA) will join the closing conference of the two-year project Chain of Trust, answering the question why nurses, doctors, pharmacists and patients are not applying tele-health solutions?

Finally, following up on the work and political discussions in 2012, on education, on workforce and on quality and safety, I want to reiterate my concerns about governments downgrading the nursing education in the EU. I encourage all nursing stakeholders, professional associations, unions and regulators, next to the educators, students, and academic to speak up and convince politicians and policy-makers for 12 year entry requirement and one educational system leading to highly qualified and motivated nurses. We need them now and in the future!

Unni Hembre
EFN President

"(...) Nurses have become easy targets in times of endless cuts. Austerity measures are impacting budgets across Europe, and the healthcare sector in particular is losing the battle. More than ever, health system reforms are needed to equip the sector and health professionals with the necessary resources to meet current and future challenges. (...) Nursing leadership is needed at the very top, where decisions are made. Only then can the healthcare sector respond to the crisis, by applying cost-effective and innovative approaches to healthcare delivery systems."

Extract from the European Federation of Nurses Association article on "[Why are nurses seen as 'easy targets' for cuts?](#)", published by Public Service Europe Review, in November 2012.

News from EFN

European Skills, Competences and Occupations taxonomy (ESCO)

Selected as an expert in the reference group on "healthcare and social work activities" of the European Commission "[European Skills, Competences and Occupational taxonomy](#)" (ESCO), the EFN participated in the meeting held on 11-12 December 2012, in Brussels. The participants were updated on the status of establishing the taxonomy expert group (TEG) and had the opportunity to discuss on the finalisation of the sectoral breakdown (nursing was chosen for the initial prototype) and the identification of an occupation from each sub-group (TEG to evaluate to what extent the list of occupations has to include the specialties and the national cases). It is important this work fits the skill panorama so efforts are converting towards evidence based policies in the EU. The next meeting will take place on 12 March 2013. In this context, the EFN also organised a meeting on 11 December, prior to the ESCO meeting, which brought together nursing groups of ESCO to share information and views, and to agree on the classification of nurses to present to the Reference Group. Agreement on the EFN position, namely the division in four levels: healthcare assistants, registered nurses, specialist nurses, and advance practice nurses, was fully supported.

Working Group on Patient Safety and Quality of Care

As member of the European Commission working group on patient safety and quality of care, bringing in together representatives from the 27 EU countries, EFTA countries, international organisations and EU bodies, the EFN participated in the [meeting held on 20 November](#), in Brussels. The aim of this meeting was to discuss the work plan of the Group for 2013-2014 taking into account the conclusions of the implementation report on the Council Recommendation on patient safety (including the prevention and control of Healthcare Associated Infections - HCAI), and work of the Joint Action on Patient Safety and Quality of Care (PASQ). On the Council recommendation, it was concluded that there is room for improvement in the areas of patient empowerment and education of health workers and more needs to be done in the non-hospital care sector. 24 Member States would welcome a guideline on patient safety standard and there is also a need for more evidence about costs of unsafe care in order to help political prioritisation.

Innovating for Better Health

The EFN General Secretary was invited to participate in the meeting organised by Microsoft on "[Innovating for Better Health: Doing New with Less](#)", to discuss the benefits and limitations of using ICT. The meeting brought together high growth EU start-ups developing new technology solutions, health authorities at national and regional level, health providers and professionals, patients and policy actors from the European Commission, European Parliament, and the EU Member States. The EFN took part in the panel discussion related to policy influence and design, in which the main key points highlighted during the dialog were: the gender component picked up by Horizon 2020, the lack of support of the management to pick up tele-health solutions (related to working conditions), and the importance of Trust (moving in such a way that the end-user, the patient, is not caught up in endless discussions of privacy, legal binding issues, etc.). The gender approach to policy-making and technology development was well perceived by the audience, mainly consisting of business men of SME.

International nurse leader receives an award

Franz Wagner, a nurse, working as Chief Executive Officer of the German Nurses Association (a member of EFN) and director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center, received the HRH Princess Muna al-Hussein Award for his outstanding commitment to the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC's) Magnet Recognition Program around the globe. As an international nurse leader, also representing DBfK in EFN and ICN, he has worked hard to advance standards of excellence in nursing and health care worldwide. The EFN takes this opportunity to congratulate Franz for this award and for his strong commitment and hard work towards the nurses and the nursing profession. Especially in times of austerity, governments lowering down standards, this award need to inspire nurse leaders, policy-makers and politicians.

News from the EU

Professional Qualifications Directive

On 23-24 January, the European Parliament Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee is expected to adopt MEP Bernadette Vergnaud's [report on the modernisation of Directive 36](#). After an intense and still on-going political debate, the compromise between the Commission, European Parliament and Council will be probably reached during the Irish EU presidency, knowing the German opposition has a minority block. Unfortunately, the current economic climate and negotiations on other files are preventing other Member States to speak up. Acknowledged to be the most controversial point in the text, the compromises around the nurses' requirement of general education will be presented and voted on 23-24 January 2013. MEPs acknowledge EFN members lobby work and strong support to the 12-year requirement, being against the German dual system. The pressure coming from the NNAs has a huge impact on the MEPs who could not be deaf to what their nationals have to say. Therefore, all EFN members are encouraged to write and phone their IMCO parliamentarian PRIOR to the vote on 23-24 January.

European Commission Work Plan 2013

The [Commission Work Plan for 2013](#) has been recently adopted. The sustainability of health systems, effective investments, and patient safety set the scene of priorities. Several projects and a joint action will look into innovative approach for chronic diseases. Aligning actions with the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, specific attention will be given to falls prevention, diabetes and adherence to treatments. In order to address the shortages of skilled health workforce, the commission will encourage actions on Continuous Professional Development (CPD), on education and training of health professionals, as well as on recruitment and retention strategies.

Putting patients in the driving seat: A digital future for healthcare

Beginning of December, the European Commission published its [eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020](#) aiming to address barriers to the full use of digital solutions in Europe's healthcare systems, and to improve healthcare for the benefit of patients. The Action Plan attempts to increase the pace of change and improvement in healthcare by: improving interoperability between systems; increasing awareness and skills among patients and healthcare professionals; and putting patients at the centre with initiatives related to personal health management and supporting research into personalised medicine. The members of the new eHealth Network, established by the [Cross-border Healthcare Directive](#) will help implement the Action Plan and provide a direct link to the national healthcare authorities and government departments.

EU Skills Panorama

The European Commission has officially launched the [EU Skills Panorama](#) – an online tool presenting quantitative and qualitative data on short- and medium-term skills needs, skills supply and skills mismatches. Drawing on data – sector by sector, profession by profession, and country by country-, and forecasts compiled at EU and Member State levels, it will highlight the fastest growing occupations and the top 'bottleneck' occupations with high numbers of unfilled vacancies. Next to this online tool, the European Commission also published the [European Vacancy and Recruitment Report \(EVR\)](#), one of the main information sources of the EU Skills Panorama. This biennial report, released for the first time, features recent developments in terms of contractual arrangements, sector and occupation demand as well as skills requirements.

Public Consultation on the implementation of European Reference Networks (ERN)

The European Commission DG Health and Consumers launched a [public consultation](#) on the implementation of European Reference Networks (ERN) under the framework of article 12 of [Directive 2011/24/EU](#) on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, and more specifically as regards the criteria to be considered in the process of identification and designation of healthcare providers as Centers of Excellence. The deadline to [provide your input](#) is 22 February 2013. The EFN is also providing its input to this consultation.

Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies (January 2013-June 2014)

On 11 December, in Brussels, the Ministers of the European Union Member States endorsed [the programme of the Council of the European Union for the Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies](#). Looking at innovative ways to foster economic growth and employment, health becomes a cornerstone to achieve it. The three presidencies will focus on quality job creation, reforms of labour markets and investment in human capital. Special attention will go to the social consequences of the crisis and at actions to address these. Key for achieving the full potential of the Single Market, there is a strong willingness to remove existing barriers to mobility of EU workers. Evaluating the impact that the economic situation is having on health and health systems the Presidencies will move forward the reflection process on modern, responsible and sustainable health systems, the management of

chronic diseases and the role that eHealth can play in support it. Health and safety at work will be a priority and more attention will be paid on social protection, gender equality, adequate access to services and effective responses to address the increasing need for long-term care. Finally, evidence based, research and innovation will orient the work of the Presidencies. All preparations will be arranged to allow a full start of Horizon 2020 programs in 2014. An evidence based approach to policy making has been largely acknowledged at European level which makes EFN's future, in particular the preparations for the European Nursing Research Institute, even more relevant.

Publications

Health at a Glance: Europe 2012

DG Health and Consumers of the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) jointly published the second edition of "[Health at a Glance: Europe 2012](#)" which presents the most recent comparable data for a set of key indicators of health and health systems in 35 European countries focussing on five main topics: population health status; risk factors to health; resources and activities of health care systems; quality of care for chronic and acute conditions; and health expenditure and financing sources. These indicators, based on the [European Community Health Indicators \(ECHI\) list of indicators](#), show that: Health status has improved dramatically in the EU countries, although gaps persist; risk factors to health are changing; the number of doctors and nurses per capita is higher than ever before in most countries, but there are concerns about current or future shortages; quality of care has improved in most of the EU countries, although they can do better; and growth in health expenditure has slowed or fallen in many of the countries.

European Commission report on patient safety

The European Commission published a [report](#) which highlights the state of implementation of the [Council Recommendation \(2009/C 151/01\)](#) on patient safety – including the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections-, a key topic for which the EFN lobbied hard at that time and is still following closely. The report points out that the EU Member States have implemented several measures, as establishing patient safety in public health policies and identifying competent authorities, but stresses that more efforts are needed towards actions targeting patients (patient empowerment), and health professionals (more education and training). The report also highlights that the economic crisis slowed down the implementation of the Recommendation due to changing public health priorities. On the prevention and control of Healthcare associated infections, most of the countries have implemented a combination of actions to prevent and control such infections. But more efforts are needed to ensure adequate numbers of specialised infection control staff, receiving regular training, and with dedicated time for this task in hospitals and other healthcare settings.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2012

The World Economic Forum (WEF) published its [annual report on gender equality](#) which provides a comprehensive overview of the performance and progress on the gap between men and women over the last six years. The 'Global Gender Gap Report' ranks the countries on their ability to close the gender gap based on four key areas: access to healthcare, access to education, political participation and economic equality. In the fields of health and education progress has been strong globally with 96% of health gaps and 93% of education gaps having now been closed across the 135 countries surveyed. The Nordic countries are ranked in top spots, with Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden having closed over 80% of their gender gaps. At the bottom of the ranking, some countries still need to close gender gaps of almost 50%, while more than half of the countries surveyed have failed to close their economic gender gap by more than 5% in the past seven years.

Prevention and Management of Nutrition-related Disease in the Older Adults

The European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) published a press release on "[The Role of the Dietitian in the Prevention and Management of Nutrition-related Disease in the Older Adults](#)" which highlights the dietitians' roles in prevention and treatment at a strategic, educational and operational level for two main target groups: healthy older adults and sick older adults including the frail older adults. As members of integrated interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams, Dietitians have a central role to play in supporting both the prevention and management of nutrition-related disease in older adults.

Agenda

To view the upcoming meetings' dates, click [here](#).