



# EFN Activity Report 2016

## Executive Summary

The European Federation of Nurses Association (EFN) represents over three million nurses through its 36 Members in 35 states (including all 28 EU Member States), and is the independent voice of the profession at European level. The mission of the EFN is to promote the interests, status and practice of the profession of nursing in the EU. Taking forward the EFN's mission, and its [Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan 2014-2020](#), the EFN continued to strengthen its political position in 2016 towards the EU Institutions and key EU stakeholders to keep nurses and nursing high on the political EU agenda. This document sums up the lobby work of the EFN and the outcomes achieved for the year 2016, divided under different themes: 'education', 'workforce', 'patient safety & quality of care'.

## Education

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2016 started with the implementation deadline (18/01/2016) of [Directive 2013/55/EU](#) updating the already existing [Directive 2005/36/EC on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications](#). This was a milestone for the nursing profession, as Member States should have implemented the 8 competences of Article 31 of the Directive by then, and as such, providing a strong education basis for all nursing curricula across the EU. The European Commission has been checking the implementation of the Directive throughout the year, a process that is most likely to be finished in the beginning of 2017. Following this process, the Commission will start infringement procedures against Member States who are not complying with the EU legislation. In order to strengthen Article 31, **the EFN has been advocating and lobbying for the introduction of a Delegated Act to modernise Annex V of the Directive in collaboration with nursing regulators**. The proposed update to Annex V builds on the [EFN Competency Framework](#). The EFN has also been advocating for the correct implementation of the Directive at European level, but also at national level through its Members.

Parallel to the implementation check by the Commission, **the EFN has developed a questionnaire to measure compliance with the Directive**. The questionnaire does not concern the Directive as a whole, but only the parts that affect the nursing profession. It also focuses on the actual nursing curricula and not on the national legislation. We need to know if each nurse coming out of each nursing school throughout the EU, complies with art 31 of the Directive to meet the standard required for recognition as a nurse across Europe.

It is within this context that the EFN supports **the newly introduced [European Professional Card \(EPC\)](#)** which relies on the existing IMI system (another novelty of the amended Directive). The EPC can be seen as a pilot project and upon its evaluation it will potentially be expanded to other professions. Nurses are proud to support innovation in the EU. For the moment, nurses have been selected for the first phase of this new initiative, which has been rather

successful until now, with 147 having benefited from automatic recognition through a completely electronic manner.

## EU Workforce for Health

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The EFN continued to lobby for an updated and comprehensive picture of the nursing profession. The EFN's goal is to make sure that the data collected on nursing are comparable and usable by EU, national and local policy-makers and professionals. **Therefore, raising awareness about the correctness of statistical data has been one of the priorities for 2016.** Too often, a common definition of who is considered a “nurse” in different countries is missing, making it impossible to compare data across Europe.

Especially because of the Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, that lays down a definition for “nurses of general care”, the solution is obvious. As a basis for solving this issue, **the EFN developed its [Workforce Matrix 3+1](#)**, providing qualitative and quantitative data on the three categories of nursing care (general care nurse, specialist nurse and advanced nurse practitioner). It also recognises the contribution of Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) and the leading role of nurses in their supervision and development, aiming to support future scenarios of workforce configurations which keep on delivering high quality and safe care to those who need care. Next to the Matrix, a [position paper](#) was approved by the EFN members at the EFN Madrid General Assembly, in October 2016. The EFN Matrix will be important for developments in the area of workforce planning across the EU, Europe and even globally. Importantly, the EFN Members use the EFN Matrix 3+1 at national level to influence the workforce composition and provide clarity to the different nurses' roles and responsibilities.

The EFN has continued to contribute to important debates on nurses' recruitment & retention, and the ongoing workforce planning and forecasting and will continue to monitor this work in 2017. In this context, the EFN participated in various meetings, including the (recently finished) [Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting](#) and meetings of the [Expert Group on European Health Workforce](#). However, the challenge of data comparability remains as different qualifications are put in one basket, making planning and forecasting unrealistic. International organisations like the EU, the OECD, the ILO and WHO urgently need to access and utilise **comparable data in the EU based on the EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1**.

## Patient Safety and Quality of Care

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The EFN has focused on six topics, under this theme, namely: Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), the European Semester, Value of Health Systems, Cross border healthcare, eHealth, and eSkills.

- **AMR** - The EFN strengthened its collaboration with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ([ECDC](#)), by participating in various meetings and workshops, and raising awareness about the impact of nursing in tackling this issue of global health. Furthermore, the EFN [Policy Statement and Position Paper](#) on Nurses Combatting AMR, as key lobby instrument, will support the EU institutions and national governments in developing ‘fit for practice’ strategies and evidence on the impact that nurses have on

Antimicrobial Resistance. In doing so, the [Guidelines](#) produced by the ENS4Care project were promoted and used further.

- **European Semester** - This topic required a strong lobby work from EFN with the key policy makers, such as the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion ([DG EMPL](#)). The EFN promoted the use of the [European Semester](#) as a tool to have substantial impact on national policies to improve healthcare across Europe, together with other EU Stakeholders. The EFN Members also approved an [EFN Policy Statement and Position Paper](#) calling on the national and European policy-makers to acknowledge the importance of investing in health. The two documents call for more efficient health and social care funding allocation and better working conditions for the nursing workforce, building on existing integrated care ecosystems throughout the EU. Next to this, an [article on the topic](#) was also published. Having an impact on the Commission's Country Specific Recommendations will, therefore, remain a priority throughout 2017.
- **Value of Health Systems** - This has become a key political topic at European and international levels, in which nurses input is crucial as it is about measuring outcomes. Nurses measure a lot, which impacts heavily on their workload. The EFN engaged in the political debate with the relevant key players to ensure that this work can support change that improves outcomes for patients. The EFN has the evidence that change can happen and that sustainable solutions for long term care can be implemented, if nurses take a leading role. The EFN will be arguing for more action in the coming year, to support those on the frontline.
- **eHealth** - It can facilitate access to healthcare, regardless of the geographical location, but it can also improve existing systems and facilitate the work of healthcare professionals and improve or personalise the care process and outcomes. Selected by the European Commission as a member of the eHealth Stakeholder Group, the EFN contributed to and shaped the future priorities of the Commission.
- **eSkills** - These are key for the healthcare professions, patients and (informal)-carers to accompany the new technology facilitating health and social care services delivery. Without the right eSkills these technologies will not be fully integrated into existing health and social care pathways. The EFN has been a key player on this, and will continue this process of lobbying on this crucial topic for nurses in the EU lobby arena.
- **Cross-Border Healthcare** - This has been a priority throughout the year, knowing that highly qualified and motivated nurses, supported by their employers, and stimulating free movement, are key to modernise healthcare systems throughout the EU. Six years after the adoption of the [Committee of the Regions' opinion](#) on cross-border healthcare and two years after the deadline for transposing the [Directive](#) into national law, the issue is still high on the EU's agenda. The EFN was asked to speak in various meetings and followed up the file from a continuity of care and an e-health perspective.

## Conclusion

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2016 has been a busy and fruitful year for the organisation. The EFN and its Members have created practical tools and trust, which is a key component for change. The nurses and the nursing profession in the EU are very visible, with a strong voice towards the European and international organisation, positioning nurses and nursing prominently on the political

agenda. Politicians and policy makers have all interest to listen to nurses, frontline, to make policies for health and social care 'fit for purpose. EFN strongly believes that this will built trust, bringing EU citizens closer to the EU institutions. The EFN and its members will continue pushing the EU Institutions and decision makers, in 2017, to get the right messages across and achieve the best outcomes for citizens.

On a final note, the EFN would like to thank all nurses and health professionals, the police and firefighters, close colleagues to nurses, for their support during the Zaventem and Maelbeek IS attacks. They remained very professional and efficient, caring for others, while facing something they would never expect to face. All EFN members have expressed high recognition and thanks to each individual.

Nurses are moving into these dangerous environments to rescue others, and putting their own lives in danger. There is, therefore, an [urgent need](#) to protect and get more support to nurses and other health workers in all those conflict areas, so they can help children and adults and be as safe as possible!

*"We cancelled our General Assembly in Brussels last April, due to human madness and fanaticism. We were all very sad... I would like to have a "deep" thought for the victims of Brussels bombings, but also for all victims of terrorism in the world, and for all those who were at the forefront to help the victims. As human and citizen, as health professionals, as nurses, we must fight everywhere and every day, against fanaticism, fascism and totalitarianism, but also, all kind and all forms of manipulations and dominations."*

*(Yves Mengal, FNIB)*