



## EFN Input to

### WHO Regional Office for Europe

#### *Online open written consultation on the European Programme of Work*

**Note:** this consultation is based on the Draft European Programme Work, 2020-2025. It is available in English, French, German and Russian [here](#).

**The EPW is focused around three core priorities: - Moving towards universal health coverage - Protecting against health emergencies - Promoting health and well-being. Have any important policy avenues or opportunities been missed for moving forward with these priorities? Is the balance correct?**

These priorities are correct; however, they should include the empowerment of healthcare professionals and more concretely of the nursing workforce. During the COVID-19 outbreak the nursing workforce have been at the frontline of care, 24/7 with the patient, and their contribution has been essential to ensure that our healthcare systems could cope with the outbreak. All these prove that nurses are essential to protect against health emergencies. Moreover, relating to the three outlined objectives specifically, nurses can make fundamental contributions in advancing universal health coverage. Finally, the nursing workforce, due to their very close relationship with patients, are strong promoters of health and wellbeing among their patients and the overall population. To conclude, as Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said, “nurses and midwives are at the heart of progress toward Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals. They are not only essential for delivering health services; their experience and knowledge are also valuable assets in shaping health policy, and their voices deserve to be heard at the policy-making table”.

**The EPW highlights three tracks for the Regional Office to maximize country impact: intensifying its collaboration with international partners at regional or subregional level; improving its collaboration with national and subnational health authorities to reinforce sector leadership and build trust; and adjusting its own structures into a fit-for-purpose organization. Are these three tracks realistic and sufficient to make a substantial difference?**

The three outlined tracks are realistic but insufficient to make a substantial difference for European citizens. Even though all of them are needed and progress should be made at those, the WHO should actively seek to engage with civil society organisations (such as the European Federation of Nurses Associations [EFN], representing the nursing profession in Europe). These organisations, representing nurses, other healthcare professionals, patients and citizens are the needed link between international policymakers and the end-users of those policies. Engaging with organisations such as the EFN and others should be added as a fourth track that fosters end-user co-creation – which is the most effective way of making a substantial difference and of ensuring the fit-for-purpose of new policies.

**How can Member States and other partners (including you/your organization) contribute to making the Regional Office collaborate more effectively and efficiently? How can they help mobilize the human and other resources needed to achieve the goals of the EPW?**

Building on the reply given to the previous question, the engagement of organisations representing the civil society (such as the EFN, in representation of 3 million EU nurses and 6 million nurses across the whole of Europe) is essential to foster the co-creation of fit-for-purpose policies with their end-users (namely healthcare professionals, patients, and citizens). Translating these into concrete actions mean that the WHO Europe Regional Office should actively seek the advice, engagement and opinion of these organisations. Whenever possible, funds should be allocated to them to empower them in their daily job and to give them more resources to make a more effective contribution to the formulation of health policies for Europe. \

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