



## EFN POSITION PAPER ON CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Continuous Professional Development is understood as “*The systematic maintenance, improvement and continuous acquisition and/or reinforcement of the lifelong knowledge, skills and competences of health professionals. It is pivotal to meeting patient, health service delivery and individual professional learning needs. The term acknowledges not only the wide ranging competences needed to practise high quality care delivery but also the multi-disciplinary context of patient care (EC, 2014).*”

The EFN recognises the right and duty of continuous professional development (CPD) for nurses in the light of delivering high quality care and patient safety. CPD helps to ensure that nursing practice is up-to-date, contributes to improving patient outcomes and increases the public confidence in the nursing profession (EFN, 2012).

However, at European level there is considerable variance of CPD across countries, with systems that are mandatory and voluntary, and formal and informal delivery of CPD activities. Notwithstanding these different approaches, there is a general belief of the positive outcomes that CPD has on nurses’ practice and patient outcomes.

The EFN welcomes policy recommendations that strengthen nurses’ accessibility to CPD and that address the main barriers currently preventing nurses to access CPD, such as lack of working time and resources, human as financial means. More concretely (EC, 2014):

- Nurses should have the opportunity to access CPD in all EU Member States, supported by appropriate structures, according to Member States’ obligation under the revised Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications.
- CPD systems should be sufficiently flexible to ensure that content and form of delivery of CPD satisfy the needs and interests of the nurse. CPD that is relevant to daily professional practice is likely to strengthen the motivation of the professional to undertake CPD and enhance the impact of CPD on healthcare provision. The choice of CPD activities should be based on learning plans at the level of the nursing profession and of the individual nurse, as well as the organisational level.
- CPD within working hours should be encouraged and facilitated by adequate agreements at systemic, sectoral and organisational level. Those nurses following CPD should be replaced to not compromise patient care.
- Competent authorities, employers and professional organisation need to work collectively to consider time and/or resources available for nurses to leave the workplace and cover the cost. When establishing or reviewing CPD systems, it is important to engage the nurses in its design as appropriate measures need to be taken to support the CPD accessibility. The practicability, overall effectiveness and impact on the profession on service provision is key when developing CPD systems.
- Any decision to implement CPD or develop an existing CPD system should be made with the involvement of all stakeholders: professional organisations, regulators, government bodies, patients, educators, employers and trade unions.
- Taking into account the increasing collaboration between health professionals and the need for a more integrated care system, linking health and social care, CPD activities for multidisciplinary health teams should be developed. The exchange of information at EU level may contribute to best practice models in this respect.
- Funding under Horizon 2020 should be made available to research projects focusing on CPD for health professionals. Further research at European level on the impact of CPD activities on patient outcomes and patient safety should be undertaken as a priority to inform policy-makers.
- The European Commission should make the information on health professionals’ CPD collected in the context of the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications available to the public and should develop a proposal to bring actions out of the data collected.

### References:

- European Commission (2014), *EU Study concerning the review and mapping of continuous professional development and lifelong learning for health professionals in the EU*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/docs/ev\\_20141124\\_co01\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/docs/ev_20141124_co01_en.pdf)
- European Federation of Nurses Associations (2012), *EFN Country Report on CPD in nursing*. Available at: <http://www.efnweb.be/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/EFN-Report-on-CPD-June-2006-Final-rev-22-10-2012.pdf>

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