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On the International Nurses Day, the EFN urges national governments to STOP downgrading nurses and risking citizens' lives to save money!

Celebrated on 12 May, the date of Florence Nightingale's birth, the International Nurses' Day is a global event initiated by the ICN in 1965 and held each year in recognition of nurses' invaluable work. Nurses are the largest occupational group in the health sector, providing frontline care, 24 hours/7 days in a roll, 365 days a year.

But looking at nursing in the EU, is there something to celebrate today?

Although the [Council conclusions on Innovation for the benefit of patients](#) (2014) recognised that "*Innovations in healthcare can contribute to health and well-being of citizens and patients, (...) and can lead to more effective ways to organise, manage and monitor work within the health sector as well as to improve the working conditions for healthcare staff*", national governments within the EU Member States keep on cutting health budgets on the back of nurses' salary, on nurses' posts, compromising the quality of care and patient safety.

Furthermore, in many EU Member States (Malta, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, ... and UK) governments are today replacing general care nurses – [DIR55](#) nurses – with cheaper, lower qualified nurses, with a lower salary, doing tasks outsourced from Registered Nurses (RN), but not complying with the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), preventing them to move freely in the EU based on mutual recognition of professional qualifications. The EFN is, therefore, not surprised at all that infringement procedures for non-transposition of DIR55 (that should have been implemented in all the EU Member States since 18 January 2016, which is not the case) are to be launched. Fortunately, nurses can rely on EU legislation, holding governments back from downgrading nurses.

Therefore, on the International Nurses' Day, the EFN calls on the European Commission, the European Parliament and Council to support nursing as a profession, and value the work of 3 million nurses in the EU, highly valued by its citizens, but not by its politicians.

Nurses are proud of being nurses, supporting the weakest in our society. Self-interest is not driving the nursing profession, instead, altruism keeps us going, keeps us smiling, keeps us advocating for those needing support and making sure health services are safe and of high quality. Thus, resilient health and social ecosystems need to support nurses, empower nurses, value nurses.



END

Recent books on Nurses Lobbying the EU:

- [The EU, What's in it for me?](#)
- [EU Lobby Strategies Fitting a New Political Context](#)

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