

EFN PRESS RELEASE

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FIELDWORKERS SAFETY AT HIGH RISK DUE TO CUTS IN HEALTH SECTOR

The EFN Secretary General, Dr Paul De Raeve, attended the World Summit on “Nursing and Ebola Virus” that took place in Madrid, on 27–28 October, and the related Press Conference organised earlier this morning.

The EFN followed closely the progress of the first case of Ebola infection outside Africa that happened in Spain, since the last 6 October, and listened carefully to the nurses needs when dealing with Ebola in daily practice that have been presented at the World Summit. In this regards, the EFN is highly concerned about the working conditions in which Spanish nurses have to work: a lack of appropriate training, unclear instructions, lack of comprehensive protocols and qualitative/quantitative data, and ineffective preventive and protective measures, next to stigmatisation. This is Europe 2014!

The cuts that health care systems have been suffering the recent years are taking their toll. The EFN states that without appropriate resources and investments, and without a highly qualified and competent workforce in the right number, there is none protective measure enough to safeguard safety. Nurses are putting their own life at risk as 95% of all activities are carried out by nurses. In the Spanish case, out of the 108 visits to the isolation room of the patient, 102 were done by a nurse. In contrast, nobody asked the nurses’ views on what to do, how to improve and what standards are needed.

The EFN, therefore, calls on the European Union and national governments:

- to implement zero tolerance based on a system of transparency;
- to guarantee the privacy of the patient and professional ethical codes when dealing with patients;
- to mobilise sufficient resources for infection control material and appropriate staffing, two conditions to make the system work efficiently and safely;
- to put in place enough preventive and protective measures;
- to invest in the education and training of health professionals to deliver high quality care, safe care and to avoid contamination;
- to engage nurses at all levels of policy design, including the development of evidence based protocols;

- to strategically communicate knowledge to prevent stigmatisation; and,
- to ensure appropriate implementation of existing EU legislation on Biological Safety and Safety at Work.

The EFN calls on DG Sanco (including the European Centre for Disease Control – ECDC), DG Education, DG employment, DG Development and DG Research to immediately allocate EU funds to support the fieldworkers, the nurses, being the backbone of bedside care for patients.

The EFN calls on the December 2015 European Council of Ministers to put in place the appropriate mechanisms to strengthen health systems dealing with Ebola and to keep on being committed to “investing in health”.

All the participants of the Summit expressed their gratitude towards the committed nurses that all over the world are taking care of patients with Ebola.

END

For more information:

- [Evidence report on the Spanish case of Ebola – Executive Summary](#)
- [Madrid Declaration on the World Summit ‘Nursing & Ebola Virus’](#)

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