



European Federation of Nurses  
Associations

# EFN UPDATE

April-May-June 2020

## President's Message



Dear EFN Members and Colleagues,

First and foremost, the EFN Executive Committee has decided, due to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation in the EU, to cancel the 111<sup>th</sup> EFN General Assembly, planned on 16-17 April 2020, in Brussels, which now will take place on 15-16 October 2020, in Estonia. These are very difficult times!

From the EFN we would like to express all our support to the nurses working frontline to slow down the progress of the disease and assist citizens/patients in their awareness and recovery. We wish all our colleagues in the EU dealing daily with COVID-19 our strongest support.

Especially now, it is a privilege to be serving as your EFN President with 2020 being the World Health Organization (WHO) Year of the Nurse and Midwife. It is a very difficult year for the frontline nurses, but we should all stand tall and united to overcome this pandemic. It is very important that during the WHO Year of the Nurse and Midwife, the EFN keeps on being strategically focused on solutions.

During these last few months, the EFN continued close cooperation with the EU institutions – mainly the European Commission and the European Parliament – ensuring that policies and emergency measures stay fit-for-purpose. As already written in 2015, when Ebola hit Afrika hard, the recommendation to the EU institutions on frontline preparedness, and supported by DG Sante and the EU Presidency of Luxembourg at that time, needs to be fully implemented.

The [EFN Report](#) identifies the gaps and needs of all nurses in relation to Infection Diseases of High Consequence (IDHC) and brings in recommendations to design capacity building seminars for nurses in order to achieve better preparedness.

The EFN wants to make sure that the key EU decision makers and stakeholders at EU and national levels understand how important the mobilisation of sufficient resources and appropriate staffing is; that it is crucial to engage nurses at all levels of policy design, including the development of evidence based protocols, care pathways and materials in order to ensure their needs are well covered; and essential to get better prepared and ensure availability of education, training, protocols, use of new technology for improved communication, relevant protective equipment, and that the public and health professionals full informed and prepared, so they do not risk their own lives when caring for the sick and most vulnerable.

Colleagues, your dedication, support, knowledge, expertise and strategic insights are of high importance for EFN members in the EU and Europe. I very much look forward to us all to continuing to keep on making that positive difference for citizens and patients in the EU and Europe.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Adams  
EFN President

## Message from Italian Colleagues: Enrica Capitoni & Walter De Caro

Dear Paul, nice to hear from you and thanks a lot for writing and support toward the difficult situation we are facing in Italy in these weeks. I live in Bergamo which is the most vulnerable province of the Lombardy region now, as we have the highest number of cases and deaths for Covid-19.

Unfortunately, the number of cases keeps on going up, putting nurses and doctors in a very demanding situation. The good thing is that there is a positive feeling within work-teams and everybody is trying to give a hand to support staff who is in the frontline. As you probably know, in the all country, the graduated nurses are one month in advance to favour the fact that new nurses can start working quickly to join the units and also retired nurses have been recalled to give a hand on a voluntary basis. Everyone who can join and help is welcome. Actually, I work in education and four of our nurses have gone to work full time to be useful and help in ICUs... Obviously this situation raises concerns, also for nurses and their families, as individuals; protective devices are available, but it's a struggle, and the risks of becoming ill are high....actually we have a quite a lot of nurses who are ill at home.

Let's hope this tsunami will pass soon. We spend our time between work and home...no touching, hugging, social life. Goodness, very difficult for us! It's quite an experience that will change something deeply in our hearts.

Take care too. **It's a pandemic now and Europe is not enough coordinated in the interventions to put in place.**

Wish you all the best,  
Enrica and Walter

## News from EFN

### Cancellation of the April 2020 General Assembly

Due to the current situation with COVID-19 in Europe, and in Brussels, the EFN General Assembly, which was planned in Brussels on 16-17 April 2020, has been cancelled. The EFN will bring the April General Assembly to the October General Assembly, in Estonia. For any further information please contact the EFN office at [efn@efn.be](mailto:efn@efn.be)

### Nurses' contribution to tackling the coronavirus outbreak

The EFN [reminds](#) all health and governmental stakeholders that there are many actions that the nursing workforce can take not only to prevent themselves from getting the virus but also to prevent its spread among healthcare settings and citizens. Basic nursing measures, like hand hygiene, can be safely recommended to patients and citizens.

### EFN Nursing Now Event - European Parliament - 05 02 2020



One recent example of EFN's significant impact is the recent [EFN Nursing Now event](#) in the European Parliament, when we still had access to the EP. Our contribution to the 2020 "WHO Year of the Nurse and the Midwife" focused on the policy and political discussion on the co-

creation of a digital healthcare sector, and the importance of the Electronic Health Record. The EFN gathered a diverse group of key stakeholders from different industry sectors (SMEs), including MEPs, patient representatives, policymakers etc, as it is a fundamental principle of the Nursing Now Campaign to engage other stakeholders in a dialogue on nursing issues. The digitalisation of healthcare is a process of dialogue, between the IT designers, the end-users, and the legislators: the European Commission and the European Parliament.



The [Nursing Now Campaign!](#) and the “[WHO 2020 Year of the Nurse and the Midwife](#)” are an excellent opportunity for MEPs, European Commission officials and stakeholders to reflect on the importance of frontline nurses co-designing solutions that benefit health outcomes. The ongoing digitalisation of healthcare as well as the very valuable contribution of nurses to European

societies are central to this political debate. The EFN Press Release is available [here](#).

## News from the EU

### eHealth Stakeholder Group 2020-2022

On 7 February 2020, the European Commission announced new member organisations of the [eHealth Stakeholder Group](#) 2020-2022. The EFN has been appointed as a member and will provide its input representing 3 million end-users, nurses. The EFN is looking forward working with the Health Tech industry, patients, other healthcare professionals and the research community. The names of selected organisations are published in the [Register of Commission Expert Groups](#).

### High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence

Following an open selection process, the European Commission has appointed 52 experts to a High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence, comprising representatives from academia, civil society, as well as industry – the EFN is one of those selected organisations. More information on this group is [online](#).

### EFN Co-chair EU Vaccination Coalition

The Coalition is based on the 2018 [EU Council Recommendation](#) on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases. Healthcare professionals play a crucial role in delivering facts based on scientific evidence and increase public awareness about the benefits of immunization. The members of the Coalition [met in Brussels](#) on 9 March 2020, for the second time, to discuss present and future commitments of the Coalition as well as the upcoming media campaign that the EFN and the other Coalition co-chairs will do in April 2020, in parallel to the [European Immunization Week](#) (EIW).



### EMA - Vaccination COVID-19

Vaccine development for COVID-19 is still at an early stage. There are no existing vaccines that could be repurposed to work against the new virus. Timelines for vaccine development are difficult to predict at this point, but it is currently estimated that the first [clinical trials](#) will not start before April/May 2020. This means that it will take several months before candidate vaccines are ready for larger clinical studies. Once there is sufficient information available, [EMA](#) is ready to assess any applications for [marketing authorization](#) within the shortest possible timelines.

### European Commission Coronavirus Response Team

[Consisting of:](#) Executive Vice-Presidents Margrethe Vestager in charge of a Europe fit for the digital age & Valdis Dombrovskis in charge of economy that works for people; Paolo Gentiloni in charge of macroeconomic aspects; Thierry Breton in charge of the internal market; Stella Kyriakides in charge of all health issues; Ylva Johansson in charge of border-related issues; Janez Lenarčič in charge of crisis management; and Adina Vălean in charge of mobility.

### Toolbox for Cross-Border Healthcare

The European Commission has published a [toolbox](#), intended for patients and [National Contact Points](#) (NCPs) and containing relevant information on the legal framework of [cross-border healthcare](#), covering both Directive [2011/24/EU](#) and the [Social Security Regulations \(EC\) 883/2004](#) and [987/2009](#). This toolbox is divided into two main parts: 1/ one for patients - explaining their rights to access medical diagnosis, medical treatment, or use a prescription in any other EU/EEA country, and all situations where the Cross-border Healthcare Directive can be applied; 2/ one for National Contact Points (NCPs) - explaining how NCPs can improve their communication with patients, providing them with clear and accessible information on all aspects of accessing medical treatment abroad.

### WHO Flagship Initiative: A Decade of Patient Safety 2020-2030

The [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO) is launching a [Flagship Initiative](#) "A Decade of Patient Safety 2020-2030" as WHO contribution to the global patient safety movement, and as WHO's global response to implementing the [WHA resolution 72.6](#). This WHO flagship initiative cuts across the different areas of work, teams, departments and divisions in the organisation, with linkage of patient safety and health care safety components across the health systems elements; and linkage across the clinical programmes across the organisation for safer patient care. A PowerPoint presentation with more details is accessible [here](#).

### EU Science, Research and Innovation LinkedIn page

The European Commission has set a dedicated page, on the LinkedIn social network, to inform about the latest news on EU science, research & innovation. It is available [here](#).

## Publications

### Demographic outlook for the European Union 2020

The [European Parliamentary Research Service](#) (i.e., the European Parliament's think tank) has published the "[Demographic outlook for the European Union 2020](#)". This report examines how the economy and the labour market, but also social protection, intergenerational fairness and healthcare, the environment, food and nutrition are all driven by demography. It also looks at how the EU population is also ageing dramatically, as life expectancy increases and fertility rates fall below past levels. This has serious implications across a range of areas including the economy, healthcare and pensions.

### Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions

The [European Committee of the Regions](#) has published a [report](#) on how the latest demographic developments may have negative effects on the EU regions. It also proposes a set of measures to tackle these.

### Integrating genomics into personalised healthcare

The European Commission [Joint Research Centre](#) published the [report](#) on the high-level scientific [conference](#) 'Integrating genomics into personalised healthcare: a science-for-policy perspective', organised on 12-13 February 2019, in Brussels. This flagship event addressed, inter alia, current and future genome-based screening and diagnoses schemes in terms of quality assurance and implications for individuals, patients, the health care sector and society at large.

## Agenda

To view the upcoming meetings' dates, click [here](#).

Join us also on: [Facebook \(/efnbrussels\)](#) / [Twitter \(@EFNBrussels\)](#) / [Instagram \(@efn\\_brussels\)](#)