



European Federation of Nurses
Associations

EFN UPDATE

July-August-September 2021

President's Message



Dear EFN Members and Colleagues,

Welcome to the summer edition of the EFN Newsletter. With EFN being 50 years since it was founded, we have a lot to reflect on to and be proud of.

The EFN fully recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present unprecedented and ongoing challenges to an already fragile health system. Nurses have witnessed the devastating suffering of individuals and their families with an enormous impact on their mental and physical health. Over the past year, the EFN has highlighted the inequality of access to care, equipment, including vaccines, and other infrastructure challenges such as the stark digital divide between countries and within countries, and the fragmentation across ecosystems. However, with the roll out of the vaccination programme by all the EU Member States, there is hope for a better future for all.

With the challenging and changing global environment with the ongoing pandemic, the EFN has continued to relentlessly lobby on behalf of members by ensuring every opportunity is embraced to reflect nurses' voices and experience to inform and shape EU developments in line with our EFN SOLP 2021-2027.

One example, which is a nursing historic first, is that EFN was invited as a keynote speaker by the Italian G20 Presidency and the European Commission to present at the conference aimed at coordinating worldwide efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic. At the event on the 21 May 2021, I had the privilege to represent EFN members and presented on nurses' perspectives at the Global Health Summit in Rome. Chaired by of Prime Minister Mario Draghi and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, in attendance were global leaders G20 and invited leaders, heads of international and regional organisations, and representatives of global health bodies, sharing lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. The G20 was informed that well prepared and educated nurses equate to lower patient mortality rates and better patient outcomes and recovery is supported by a body of research. Therefore, investment in nursing strategies for retention and recruitment of nurses and midwives is a vital pillar to ensuring the building of a healthier, safer, fairer, resilient and more sustainable health systems. More than ever, nursing shortage is a key concern, with an estimate 30% of our already reduced nursing workforce leaving the profession due to the enormous burden and difficult working conditions during this pandemic. The global leaders were advised that investing in nursing is a certain investment in the health of G20 nations.

Another positive outcome is the EFN participation in the dynamic discussion on the "Future of Europe" organised by the European Parliament EPP Group, with Chancellor Angela Merkel. Digital, demographic and political transition are the watchwords to shape the future of Europe. In this digital future, the healthcare ecosystem has to follow this innovation. Focusing on the upskilling and reskilling of nurses and health professionals, it is essential to give life to a digital healthcare ecosystem.

Finally, the EFN continues being involved in key EU projects including two relating to digitalization (Interopehrate and Smart4Health), a project on vaccination (IMMUNION) that started in April 2021 and the important work on mentorship (QualMent) coming to conclusion this year. In addition, the EFN is co-chair of the EU Coalition for vaccination and will organise with the European Commission, DG Sante, a stakeholder event on 12 October 2021, prior the EFN October General Assembly.

Wishing you a safe summer and I look forward to meeting you again for our next EFN General Assembly.

Elizabeth Adams
EFN President

News from EFN

Global Health Summit



One of the main achievement for the EFN in this first half of the year was the [participation](#) of the EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, to the [Global Health Summit](#) co-organised by the Italian G20 Presidency and the European Commission, on 21 May 2021. This was a crucial opportunity for the EFN to mark

the significant [contribution of nurses](#) (*see EFN President speech at G20*) to the health and well-being of society and to reflect on their vital daily work. The COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed the value of well prepared and educated nurses which equate to lower mortality rates and better patient outcomes. The Summit ended with the signing of the [Rome Declaration](#), highlighting the principles and joint action to strengthen health systems and improve preparedness for future health crises.

Future of Europe

More than ever, it is crucial to reflect on key actions needed to be implemented at EU level to be prepared for any health crisis, as the one we are currently leaving. Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated once again that ["we are not prepared unless we are all prepared!"](#). Digital, demographic and political transition are fundamental points to be shaped for the future of Europe. At the meeting on the "Future of Europe", organised by the European Parliament EPP Group, to which the EFN participated, Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that *"From this crisis we learned that it is a global challenge, and an EU response is needed. It needs to be better prepared for the future. Health policy needs to have better coordination at EU level"*, explaining that it is necessary to act together in a cohesion way, to respond to the needs of citizens and strengthen Europe. In this context, citizens need to be included, it is key to hear their voice and to make them feel part of the European system. Besides, better coordination on Health policy at EU level means create a more equal, accessible and high-quality healthcare system for all European citizens. Nurses, as frontline, continue to play a key role in ensuring care to people. Therefore, it is vital to include nurses in the debate to improve the healthcare system, to better respond to citizens' need and to reach better results at all level, making sure the policies developed are fit-for-purpose.



Mental Health and pandemic: living, caring, acting!

Covid-19 pandemic has put a strain on individuals' physical and mental health. In this context, those who did not have previous mental illnesses were also affected. As such, Mental health problems need to be addressed and not underestimated, outlined the [high-level conference](#) on 'Mental Health' hosted by Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, on the European Mental Health Awareness Week 2021, which underlined the mental health impact of COVID-19 along **five themes - understanding - living - caring - responding - acting**. Invited as keynote speaker, Elizabeth Adams [highlighted](#) that every day, nurses and healthcare professionals face difficulties in dealing with people with mental problems and risk

acts of violence in the workplace. It is important to [address](#) Mental Health problems in a serious and consistent way for everyone's well-being and safety.

EU Projects

Over the last months, the EFN continued to be very engaged in the development of the 4 EU projects it is involved in as partner making sure that the view of nurses is represented in the co-creation process as end-user representative, leading to fit-for-purpose solutions. As regards the two H2020 projects on Digitalisation (Electronic Health Records), [Interopehrate](#) & [Smart4Health](#), things are moving step by step (as Covid-19 allows it), with activities/deliverables moving on, namely in Smart4health with the Citizens User Cases (CUCs) starting. In the context of the Coalition for Vaccination, the EFN is one of the co-chairs of, was launched on 1st April the EU project **IMMUNION** (Vaccination), which aims at supporting the EU efforts to improve equitable vaccine uptake by strengthening collaboration between healthcare professionals, public health authorities, the media and local communities. The main objectives of the project will be the dissemination of resources; strengthening the Coalition for Vaccination; increasing training opportunities; enhancing collaboration with media; and improving overall equity in vaccination. Last but not least, the Erasmus+ project - [QualMent](#) (Mentorship) - aiming to address the clinical mentor's lack in nursing education and develop the clinical mentor's competence with mentor education for national and international nursing students, is now coming to an end. In June, the EFN organised a [Multiplier event](#) in collaboration with [FINE](#), giving the European nursing Educators an insight on the project developments and its successful outcomes, namely 'Clinical mentors' competence model' through a course of mentorship competences and guidelines which will offer clear and simple instructions to be used in the daily clinical practice of mentoring.



EFN Social Media Campaigns

In the context of EFN partnerships at EU level on key topics, the EFN launched a few media campaigns over the last months, on its Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn accounts, namely on:

- > **Immunization Week Campaign** in the context of the Coalition for vaccination & IMMUNION project launch – aiming to emphasize how essential nurses are to create a strong and robust healthcare ecosystem able to face challenges and adversities, and the importance of vaccination and the fundamental role played by nurses in this context and in the health system in general. The social media campaign reached 50,000 people and interacted with 1,000 in one week. See our Social Media report [here](#).
- > **Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load campaign 2020-22** - As official campaign partner of the 'Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load campaign 2020-22' organised by OSHA, aiming at creating safe and healthy workplace conditions, the EFN launched a social media campaign in May to show the importance of creating safe workplace environments for the nurses to allow them to do their job adequately and safely. The social media campaign reached more than 10.000 people and almost 500 reactions to EFN posts. See our Social Media report [here](#).
- > **European Pillar for Social Rights** – With this campaign the EFN wanted to invite the European institutions to implement concrete actions for supporting the digitalisation of the healthcare system as a fundamental tool for creating better working conditions, and thus, create optimal conditions for retaining nurses and building more resilient health systems. The social media campaign reached 5,000 people in a few days. See our Social Media report [here](#).
- > **Covid-19: Nurses at the frontline** - the last year has been very difficult for the frontline healthcare workforce, and especially for the nurses. As such, the EFN wanted, with this campaign, to celebrate and to thank all nurses around Europe for their hard work at the forefront of the fight against coronavirus.

Every day, nurses around Europe work with dedication and professionalism to ensure high quality care to all patients. The social media campaign reached almost 80.000 people and interacted with 4.000 people in one week. Recognising nurses' contribution means take care of the health care ecosystem. Thanks again to all nurses for their flawless commitment! See our Social Media report [here](#).

News from the EU

Revised Annexe V - Directive 2013/55/EU

After 2 years of exploring (based on a [study](#) conducted by SPARK, to which the EFN members contributed to), the need to adapt the Annexe V - minimum knowledge, skills and training subjects for the profession of nurse responsible for general care - of [Directive 2005/36/EC](#), modernised by [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), this change will be finally approved. The nursing profession is therefore the 1st group who gets the Annexe V updated! The outcomes of this long process are in line with EFN expectations and reflect the changes needed by a profession that has changed and improved its legal base at EU level (See [EFN Competency Framework](#) which aims to be a guide for further progress to prevent infringement procedures). More information will follow as soon as available.

Recovery and Resilience Facility Plans

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) is the key tool of [NextGenerationEU](#) to overcome this crisis due to Covid-19 pandemic. €672,5 billion are available to support and sustain investments and reforms essential for restoring the economy of the EU Member States. Digital and Green transactions will be at the centre of this recovery. The Commission has received so far 21 recovery and resilience plans from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, and Sweden. The Commission will now assess the plans based on the eleven criteria set out in the Regulation and translate their contents into legally binding acts. This assessment will also include a review of whether the plans contribute to effectively addressing all or a significant subgroup of challenges identified in the relevant [country-specific recommendations](#) issued in the context of the [European Semester](#).

G7 Health Ministers' Declaration



The G7 Health Ministers, meeting on 3-4 June 2021, signed the [G7 Health Ministers' Declaration](#), which includes commitments on global health security, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), clinical trials and digital health. The declaration sets out an ambitious vision for how we can work together to better prepare

for and respond to future health threats, including: 1/ The importance to reaffirm international collaboration on health, in the context of a significant global crisis; 2/ The damage of the Covid-19 pandemic's effects on citizens' mental health and the global economy; 3/ The health care workers' commitment, always at the frontline in this pandemic year for protecting people and save lives; 4/ The will to re-emerge from the crisis and the important role of the G7 Ministers of health in planning and delivering healthier products and sustainable recovery strategies. In this pandemic year, the need to build a resilient healthcare ecosystem able to face future challenges became a priority. It is important to remember and recognize the tireless commitment of all nurses and healthcare professionals, and as such the need to protect and create better working conditions for all nurses and health professionals at EU level.

Horizon Europe info-days

The European Commission is organising the first edition of the [Horizon Europe info-days](#), online, from 28 June to 9 July 2021 on 9 themes, aiming to provide information on the new programme, main funding instruments, and processes of [Horizon Europe](#). The info day on **Health (cluster 1)** will be on 2 July, and will provide information on (potential) applicants about topics included in the [Cluster 1 'Health'](#) work programme of 2021. These info-days will be open for participation without prior registration.

European Commission establishes HaDea

The European Commission established, on 1st of April, the [European Health and Digital Executive Agency](#) (HaDea) which will deal with the financial management of the main European Union programs. Its ambition is to help rebuild a post-COVID-19 Europe at its heart which will be greener, more digital and more resilient for future challenges. As such, the agency will take care of the launching and management of the European Commission's key programs (including the EU4Health programme; Horizon Europe: Pillar II, Cluster 1: Health and Cluster 4: Digital, Industry and Space; Digital Europe Programme), and will take care of publishing the new funding opportunities and calls for tenders. The agency is led by a Steering Committee composed of Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety ([DG SANTE](#)) staff and DGs for Research and Innovation ([RTD](#)), for Communications Networks, Content and Technology ([CNECT](#)), for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs ([GROW](#)) and for Defence Industry and Space ([DEFIS](#)).

Europe's Digital Future

The European Commission has launched a [public publication](#) for the elaboration of a set of principles to promote and support the EU in the digital space. The aim of the consultation is to open a real social debate to collect the opinions of citizens, non-governmental organizations, civil society, administrations, businesses and all interested parties on the digital issue. Ultimately, it is to elaborate the principles that will guide the EU and the member states in the design of digital rules and regulations to all the benefits of digitization. Deadline to provide input to the consultation: 2 September.

WHO Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2021-2025

On 1st April WHO published the draft "[WHO Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2021-2025](#)" which highlights key political priorities to ensure that nurses and midwives contribute optimally to achieving universal health coverage and other population health goals. This draft follows the decision WHA73 (30) which asks WHO "To engage with all WHO regions to update the Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2016-2020 and, following consultations with Member States, submit this update to the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly for its consideration." The primary targets of this document are health workforce planners and policy makers, as well as education institutions, public and private sector employers, professional associations, labour unions, bilateral and multilateral development partners, international organizations, and civil society.

Advancing a Stronger Social Europe

Strengthening the [social dimension](#) of the EU is a key point in addressing the social and economic impact caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and accelerating green and digital transitions. According to a survey on social issues, 88% of Europeans consider Social Europe necessary to be implemented and 71% consider as a serious problem the lack of social rights. In this context, European leaders are determined to continue the implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), and its [Action Plan](#) at EU and National level, to create new and better jobs and improve job quality; invest more in the education sector; fight poverty and increase social inclusion in terms to reduce inequalities; fight discrimination; and support young people. The implementation of the European Pillar for Social Rights is fundamental for nurses, who every day risk their life to take care of the others and are subjected to stressful and unsafe working conditions. Therefore, better workplace conditions are essential, next to investing in nursing education, skills, upskilling and reskilling. In the light of these changes, giving new competencies to face professional challenges need to become a priority.



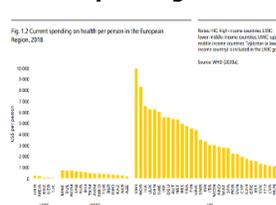
Revised statute for the European Ombudsman

The European Parliament adopted its [updated proposal for the reform](#) of the statute of the European Ombudsman, with 602 votes in favour, 9 against and 81 abstaining, aiming to replace the existing Ombudsman's Statute, last amended in 2008 (prior to the Lisbon Treaty coming into force) and further strengthen and improve the

Ombudsman's role and effectiveness. The text reflects the informal understanding reached between the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the EU Council. "A strong, well-resourced and independent Ombudsman is essential for maintaining high ethics and accountability standards in the EU administration", said Emily O'Reilly

Publications

WHO: Spending on health in Europe



WHO published a [report](#) that analyses health spending in 53 countries of the WHO European Region from 2000 to 2018, focussing on: Health spending before the pandemic; Priority given to health in governments' budgets; Mandatory health financing arrangements; Spending on primary health care; the implications of Covid-19 on health spending; and the role of public policy to limit negative effects of the pandemic and build health system resilience.

Growing Old in Europe

On 14 June 2021, the Council of the EU endorsed the key conclusions of the 2021 reports on long-term care and on pension adequacy, that illustrate the situation of older people in the EU. The [Long-term care Report](#) observes that population ageing is driving an increased demand of long-term care services and that many more older women (33%) need long-term care than men (19%). Women are also the large majority of carers, while many workers in the sector experience difficult working conditions and low wages, resulting in labour shortages. The EFN Members are strongly engaged in [contributing](#) to deliver [long-term care](#) positive outcomes, with the EFN engaged in the co-design of EU policies based on frontline experiences. The [Pension adequacy Report](#) highlights that, although pensions are lower than work incomes, in most EU Member States pensions and taxation ensure more equal income and lower poverty in old age than in working age. Women's pensions are catching up with men's pensions very slowly, and therefore, leaves many women, especially aged above 75, at risk of poverty.

Changing priorities: the impact of Covid-19 on national policy agendas

[Eurofound](#) published a series of articles that explores working life issues in the 27 EU Member States, Norway and the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic, as: an [analysis](#) that shows that the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the implementation of some political developments, as on digitization and the use of new technologies in all areas of work, and decelerated others, as on social dialogue for some political developments on employment, pensions and the minimum wage; a [study](#) that shows that Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on the labour market and women have been most affected. This number is linked to the fact that the sectors most affected by this pandemic are also those in which the number of women is greatest. The pandemic has also increased cases of domestic violence against women, including cases of violence against nurses (in the workplace and not just at home). It is therefore important to promote gender equality and to ensure the right protection for nurses and women in general; an [article](#) on the work problems faced by the EU Members States during the Covid-19 pandemic, and shows that the Covid-19 crisis has put a strain on the Member States that have been able to react by implementing policies aimed at supporting businesses and workers, with remote work that became the new normal and "green and sustainable" the new keywords for this new rebirth.

Agenda

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

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