

# NEWS FROM BRUSSELS



## Word from Senior Policy Advisor Dr. Theodoros Koutroubas

Dear Friends,

Evolutions regarding Nursing in France and Healthcare in Ireland and Poland are covered in this Newsletter. Please share your comments and national experience with us all.

Have a lovely long weekend,  
Theo

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

What the Bill on the Nursing Profession Unanimously Adopted in the French Senate Contains

Ireland launches 'National Dementia Registry' to strengthen care and planning

Warsaw Sets Sights on European Digital Health Revolution

# What the Bill on the Nursing Profession Unanimously Adopted in the French Senate Contains

The French Senate unanimously adopted the bill on the legal overhaul of the nursing profession on Monday, May 5. **This bill, submitted by the National Assembly, notably extends direct access to these caregivers and gives them the ability to prescribe certain medications.**

On May 5, the Senate examined a bill that redefines the legislative framework for the nursing profession and expands its scope of expertise. Adopted unanimously by the National Assembly in early March, this short text *"recognizes the missions of nurses and the evolution of their skills"* in a context of medical desertification, according to the explanatory memorandum. The Senate, in turn, unanimously adopted the bill. The number of nurses is growing faster than the number of physicians. **There could be 820,000 nurses by 2050, but that is far from the 900,000 that the Ministry of Health believes will be needed to address an aging population and the rise in chronic diseases.** Led by Nicole Dubre-Chirat, a member of parliament for the Ensemble pour la République (Together for the Republic) and Frédéric Valletoux, the bill aims to combat the perceived lack of recognition for the profession.

## Essential missions

The first article provides direct access to nurses for primary care, i.e., care provided by healthcare professionals who are accessible without going through the attending physician. It also defines the "five core missions" of the nursing profession. These include: providing care and evaluating it, monitoring the healthcare pathway, prevention, participating in the training of their peers, medication reconciliation, i.e., harmonizing treatments when the patient is followed by several practitioners, and relational care. During the Senate committee review, elected officials wanted to narrow down this list in order to maintain its general nature. *"The vast majority of the profession's representatives interviewed do not want, at this stage, the addition of new missions,"* observed rapporteurs Jean Sol (LR) and Anne-Sophie Romagny (Centrist Union).

This article also grants nurses the power to prescribe, based on a list of health products defined by decree. An amendment from the Social Affairs Committee, however, provides for the reintroduction of the referral to the National Academy of Medicine for an opinion, which was removed by the deputies during the session.

### **Advanced practice nurses authorized to practice in schools**

Article 2 concerns advanced practice nurses (APNs). Launched in 2016, advanced practice nursing is an intermediate level that allows, under certain conditions, the performance of procedures previously reserved for physician. *"However, the cost of training and the lack of a viable economic model have undermined the attractiveness of the APN profession and led to deployment below expectations,"* noted the Senate rapporteurs.

The bill notably expands the list of places where nurses are authorized to practice to include child protection services and schools. An amendment from the Social Affairs Committee, however, specifies that advanced practice in schools must be carried out in conjunction with a physician.

# Ireland launches ‘National Dementia Registry’ to strengthen care and planning

**The Irish government has initiated the development of a National Dementia Registry, a major step in its strategy to enhance dementia care and service planning across the country.**

Minister for Older People and Housing, Kieran O'Donnell, announced the move at a symposium on Memory Assessment Services hosted at Trinity College Dublin this week. The registry, commissioned by the Health Service Executive (HSE), will be developed and maintained by the National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA), leveraging its expertise in clinical data systems.

*“The Programme for Government commits to developing a National Dementia Registry to map services, identify need and plan the delivery of equitable access to services,”* said Minister O'Donnell.

O'Donnell announced that the HSE, through National Dementia Services, the Enhanced Community Care Programme and the National Centre for Clinical Audit, has commissioned the National Centre for Clinical Audit (NOCA) to develop, implement and maintain the Registry.

## Quality of care

The registry is expected to play a pivotal role in improving the quality of care for people with dementia, identifying service gaps, and supporting the implementation of the HSE's Dementia Model of Care.

Since 2021, the government has invested €19 million in memory assessment services and community supports.

A spokesperson for the Department of Health told Euractiv that the National Dementia Registry for Ireland will provide data on the care of people with dementia, including when and where they are diagnosed, what type of dementia they have, what post-diagnostic and community supports they are getting, what medications they are taking and what their quality of life is.

The registry will support the rollout of the HSE Dementia Model of Care and ensure that Government investment in diagnostic and community-based services is equitable and is making a difference to the care of people with dementia.

They said that it is envisaged that data on the future delivery of disease-modifying therapies (DMTs) for dementia will be integrated into the registry as they become available.

## Diagnostic data

The registry will initially collect data from a range of diagnostic services, including Memory Assessment and Support Services, regional memory clinics, and the National Intellectual Disability Memory Service. It is designed to inform both clinical practice and policy development.

*"As we continue our journey towards the delivery of Sláintecare, by providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place, delivered by the right people, the National Dementia Registry will be an important tool for the HSE to ensure that investment in diagnostic and community-based services is equitable and is making a difference to the care of people with dementia,"* said Pat Healy, HSE National Director for National Services and Schemes.

Speaking at the Trinity College symposium, Dr Seán O'Dowd, Consultant Neurologist and Clinical Lead of HSE National Dementia Services said: "With the recent licensing of the first disease-modifying therapy for early-stage Alzheimer disease, the realisation of these targets has never been more important, and further support will be needed to ensure timely diagnosis."

***"This must not compromise access to appropriate person-centred care and supports for the great number of people who will not be eligible for such treatments,"*** he added.

## EU dementia strategy

The registry is expected to evolve alongside the rollout of the European Health Data Space regulation and the implementation of electronic health records, enabling integration across the healthcare system and reducing duplication of effort.

Currently, the EU acts through a series of coordinated policy initiatives and cross-border collaborations aimed at improving care, diagnosis, and research.

At the heart of the EU's approach is the 'Joint Action on Dementia', a pan-European programme designed to support national governments in developing effective dementia strategies.

The initiative provides practical guidance on diagnosis, post-diagnostic support, and care coordination, aligning with the broader goals of the EU Health Programme.

Complementing this is the strategic plan of Alzheimer Europe, a key advocacy group backed by EU institutions. Its 2021–2025 roadmap focuses on promoting the rights of people with dementia, ensuring access to timely diagnosis and care, and fostering inclusive research.

As Europe's population continues to age, the EU's multi-pronged approach reflects a growing recognition of the need for data-driven, person-centred dementia care across member states.

### **Population accelerates trend**

The prevalence of dementia across the European Union has surged over the past two decades, with the number of people aged over 60 living with the condition rising from 5.9 million in 2000 to approximately 9.1 million by 2018, according to OECD and EU data.

Projections suggest the trend will continue sharply upward. The OECD estimates that by 2030, 13.4 million people in the EU will be living with dementia, with the figure expected to reach 18.7 million by 2050.

The data underscores the mounting pressure on Europe's healthcare systems and the urgency of coordinated policy responses to address the long-term social and economic implications of dementia.



# Warsaw Sets Sights on European Digital Health Revolution



**Poland's experiences with e-prescriptions and the Patient Internet Account could become a model for the European Union, building on valuable healthcare digitalisation lessons.**

Poland intends to use its presidency to promote European solutions in digital healthcare transformation while working towards establishing common standards for medical data at the EU level.

Warsaw's plans were discussed at a conference on "Health and Security for the Future. White Paper: Experts on Priorities and Recommendations for the Polish Presidency of the EU Council" in Warsaw on 21 February.

Along with healthcare digitalisation, prevention, mental health and combating disinformation were also discussed.

"Healthcare digitalisation in Poland is an area that may be of interest to the European Union. We have good solutions we can promote internationally," emphasised Deputy Minister of Health Katarzyna Kacperczyk during the conference, highlighting Poland's successes in this field.

Poland can boast achievements in healthcare digitalisation, including its e-prescription system, the Patient Internet Account, and the e-referral system. These solutions proved particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling patients to access medical services remotely.

According to the Ministry of Digitalisation, the Polish presidency will seek to accelerate Europe's digital transformation, with particular emphasis on the healthcare sector.

One goal is to develop common standards for medical data exchange that will enable better cooperation between healthcare systems in different member states.

The Ministry of Digitalisation also announced that during its presidency, Poland will promote the development of artificial intelligence in healthcare, cybersecurity in the medical sector, and innovative telemedicine solutions.

Special emphasis will be placed on ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive and accessible to all EU citizens.

*"We want our experiences in healthcare digitalisation to contribute to building more resilient and effective health systems throughout the European Union. Digital transformation is an opportunity to improve the accessibility and quality of medical services for all Europeans,"* Kacperczyk remarked.

The conference also discussed prevention and health education, Deputy Minister of Health Wojciech Konieczny spoke about forthcoming changes in public health related to the work on a new law in this area. He said that *"in this draft, prevention has been given an important rank and is intended to address the burning issues visible in public health."* He added that prevention will also be treated more broadly in the National Health Programme.

Mental health, particularly in the context of children and young people and new digital challenges, was another important topic. As Magdalena Sobkowiak-Czarnecka, the Undersecretary of State in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister for European Union Affairs, indicated, this is a new topic on the EU agenda.

She announced that Poland will present a report on the impact of social media on the mental health of children and young people. "Today, it is no secret to anyone what challenges we face regarding the mental health of children and young people," she said.

Another important pillar of the presidency discussed during the conference was pharmaceutical security. Poland plans to actively participate in developing the Critical Medicines Act.

Ensuring pharmaceutical security is challenging because the level of security depends on which group of medicines we are considering. *"When it comes to innovative medicines, 77% of active substances intended for European patients are produced in Europe, 12% in the United States, only 9% are produced in Asia, and 2% remain for other production locations,"* Michał Byliniak, General Director of INFARMA, told Euractiv, adding that *"This ratio of production in Europe versus Asia is exactly the opposite of generic medicines."*

During the conference new recommendations were also published in a new report - "White Book. Expert Recommendations in Healthcare"- which summarises discussions previously organised by the Institute for Social Development on Poland's EU Council presidency and its health priorities through expert comments and opinions.