NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

European NURSING Council



Word from Senior Policy Advisor Dr. Theodoros Koutroubas

Dear Friends,

The European Commission seems to take very seriously preparedness and responses to health crises. The theme is going to occupy a central part of the coming Union Plan for which you can still provide feedback.

At the European Parliament, SANT Committee has discussed the results of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

In France, our member ONI protests the inadequate transposition of key nursing-related legislation to decrees.

I was delighted to have seen many of you in Athens last week. The Congress organised by our Greek colleagues was a great success, and has opened great opportunities for the future.

Kind regards,
Theo

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

ENC at the Third International Congress of Nursing Regulators

HSC Discusses Union Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan for Health Crises

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Results and Feedback

Draft nursing decree - the National Order of Nurses of France Denounces a Text Far Removed from the Decisions of Parliament

ENC at the Third International Congress of Nursing Regulators

The **Third International Congress of Nursing Regulators** organised in Athens from the 9th to the 10th of October, by our member, the Hellenic Regulatory Body for Nurses (ENE) was a great success. Regulatory bodies from Italy, USA, Canada, Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Albania, Kosovo, Cyprus, Romania, France, Germany, Tunisia, and Croatia, were present at the event along with representatives of academia and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Congress was focused on the subject of "**Empowering & Motivating Nurses for a Sustainable Public Health,**" and has discussed the main challenges facing the nursing profession today, with particular attention to regulation, training and the future of European health systems.

The work was developed around five main themes that stimulated the analyses and reflections of the participants:

1. Shortage of nurses and strategies to attract new generations to the profession.
2. Professional development and leadership, with the aim of strengthening nursing autonomy.
3. Standardised language and traceability of nursing care
4. Burnout, job satisfaction and quality of care, crucial issues to ensure the resilience of health systems.
5. International cooperation and exchange of good regulatory practices at European and global level.

ENC was very actively present at the event. Our President, Mr Mircea Timofte, being a keynote speaker, and all the members of our Executive Board as well as our Policy Advisor, leading panel discussions and delivering presentations. A text with conclusions was presented by ENC to all participants, emphasising the need to support and motivate nurses as a fundamental pillar for public health and sustainable health systems.
ENE and its Vice-President, Mr Lambros Bizas, who was responsible for the coordination of the Congress, were duly praised for the impeccable organisation.



(Left to Right) ENC Policy Advisor, Dr Koutroubas, Vice-President of ENC and FNOPI, Dr Zega, and Dr Stievano



ENC Secretary-General, Mr Mario Gazic



(Left to Right) ENE Vice-President and ENC Treasurer, Mr Lambros Bizas, and President of the Tunisia Health Alliance, Mr Ghazi Darghouth



Group Photo of the delegations

HSC Discusses Union Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan for Health Crises

On the 15th of October, the Health Security Committee (HSC) met to discuss the upcoming Union prevention, preparedness and response plan for health crises. The Union Plan, which the Commission will present in the coming months, is one of the key actions listed in the Action Plan accompanying the EU Preparedness Union Strategy, as well as a requirement under Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health. Its aim will be to ensure that all actors are ready and capable to respond quickly and effectively to any health crisis, if needed.

During the meeting, the Commission outlined the four guiding approaches that will frame the Union Plan:

- **All-hazards** covering all types of disruptive events, irrespective of their nature or cause,
- **One-Health** reflecting the closely linked determinants for the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment,
- **Whole-of-government** bringing together all levels of administration, and
- **Whole-of-society** fostering an inclusive culture of preparedness and resilience.

The European Union is facing unprecedented threats, which need to be addressed in a coordinated manner. In recent years, the EU significantly strengthened its health security legal framework to enhance its readiness and ability to respond to future health crises, notably through the establishment of the European Health Union.

The Call for Evidence on the Union Plan – open until 29 October – gives other stakeholders and the larger public the opportunity to provide feedback and make suggestions on the topic.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Results and Feedback

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan (EBCP) was established in 2021 to put Europe's ambition **on cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment and quality of life for patients and survivors** into practice. It consists of 'ten flagship initiatives, each supported by EU-funded projects, most of which have already concluded.' The EBCP has established important foundations by creating networks, mapping inequalities, and investing in knowledge centres. These achievements now provide a basis to **advance cancer research**, improve care delivery, and make better use of existing tools.

A recent briefing requested by the European Parliament's SANT Committee has published results of the so-far successes of the initiative, as well as important areas to improve upon to achieve the desired outcomes of the Plan.

In achieving this, there are a number of initiatives the Plan aims to implement as a starting point. One of the main goals was to establish a network of Comprehensive **Cancer Centres (CCCs**) across Europe. So far, this network covers only six Member States, 'falling short of the intended goal.' In parallel to CCCs, there are also **Centres of Excellence (CoEs)** for cancer (an unofficial term applied to leading cancer research hubs). According to the report, COEs and CCCs 'contribute in complementary ways, with the former providing specialist expertise and the latter integrated services, yet their urban concentration limits access for underserved populations.' Efforts to address this could include equity performance indicators to track access and outcomes across different population groups. However, most current assessment criteria 'focus on processes rather than measurable outcomes, which limits the ability to evaluate real-world impact.'

The findings reveal that there 'remain **significant variations in the provision and reimbursement of cancer care** across Member States.' Access to screening, treatment, medicines, and palliative services is **uneven**, and **gender-related barriers** such as financial dependence, caregiving responsibilities, and stigma 'continue to affect

patient experience.' **Closer integration with social protection measures could help prevent financial hardship** was emphasised.

Several initiatives have sought to close knowledge gaps through the creation of knowledge centres and several initiatives to understand cancer, to map inequalities and to promote patient-centred care. However, further action is needed in the following areas:

- Despite the growth of CCCs in some countries, there is still no comprehensive network across all of Europe. 'More progress is needed' to ensure cancer treatment is delivered 'consistently and equitably in line with best practice guidelines', with care and support that maximise patients' quality of life;
- Vaccine coverage for preventable cancers remains insufficient. Consideration should be given to extending routine vaccination programmes to older age groups on a gender-neutral basis. Universal coverage should be provided 'without imposing out-of-pocket costs on the population';
- Mobile walk-in screening units could help reach individuals who do not respond to traditional screening invitations. Placing such units in accessible public spaces, such as shopping centres or sports venues, should be explored, as early evidence suggests they can increase participation;
- Awareness and education strategies should be designed to actively engage target groups in recommended screening programmes;
- Many cancer patients across Europe who could benefit from genomic testing still lack access to advanced diagnostics, despite rapid innovation in the field;
- To reduce disparities in access to oncology medicines, countries could 'adopt confidential differential pricing agreements that maintain price stability in high-income markets while enabling lower prices in lower-income ones.' In parallel, lower-income countries should 'streamline regulatory processes by recognising approvals from major authorities, shortening timelines, and facilitating earlier drug launches.'

Draft nursing decree - the National Order of Nurses of France Denounces a Text Far Removed from the Decisions of Parliament

Promulgated on June 27, 2025, the Nursing Profession Act marked a historic milestone. It finally recognized the role and skills of more than 600,000 nurses in the organization of care, while affirming their autonomy and facilitating better access to care for patients.

The central decree on activities and skills, currently in preparation, was to embody this ambition and provide the profession with the means to fully exercise the missions entrusted to it by Parliament.

The National Order of Nurses notes a **worrying gap between the major legislative recognition for the nursing profession and the current wording of the draft decree** presented by the General Directorate for Healthcare Provision (DGOS).

This is why the Order calls on the Government to **revise this draft decree so that it is fully faithful to the spirit of the law**. The Order will remain mobilised to ensure that this reform truly reflects the progress desired by Parliament and expected by patients and nurses alike.

The National Council of the Order of Nurses, by its deliberation in plenary session of September 18, 2025, reaffirms the requirements it places on the **missions and skills** of the profession:

- **Direct access, a reality to be made a reality for patients**

At the heart of the reform lies a key principle: direct patient access to nurses. This is a major lever for improving access to care in a context of medical desertification, but also for strengthening prevention and monitoring of chronic patients. However, the draft decree **ignores this major step forward**. Without concrete implementation or reimbursement by health insurance, direct access would remain an empty promise. However, in many European countries, nursing consultations are accessible and a source of savings thanks to prevention

and early monitoring. **Why should France deprive herself of such progress?**

- **Nursing autonomy, a recognition to be fully affirmed**

The law of June 27, 2025 recognized the autonomy of nurses and even granted them, for the first time, the power to prescribe certain products and tests. However, the draft decree **reduces this progress to a simple list of acts established by order**. Such an approach does not reflect reality: every day, nurses already exercise an autonomous role, working closely with patients. The decree must clearly reflect this recognition.

- **Coordination, a central role to be valued**

The law entrusts nurses with the mission of coordinating and guiding patients through care pathways. However, the draft decree **limits this role to a passive function**. However, in reality – in hospitals, in the community, at school, at work, or at home – nurses are already at the heart of coordinating care pathways. This mission, essential for patients and provided for by law, must be fully recognized and affirmed in the decree.

The future of the healthcare system requires an ambitious decree: nurses are ready to take their rightful place. It is now up to the government to give them the means to do so.