



EUROPE REGION

How Nurse Retention across Europe Connects to Nursing Science and Career Perspectives in the Current Climate.

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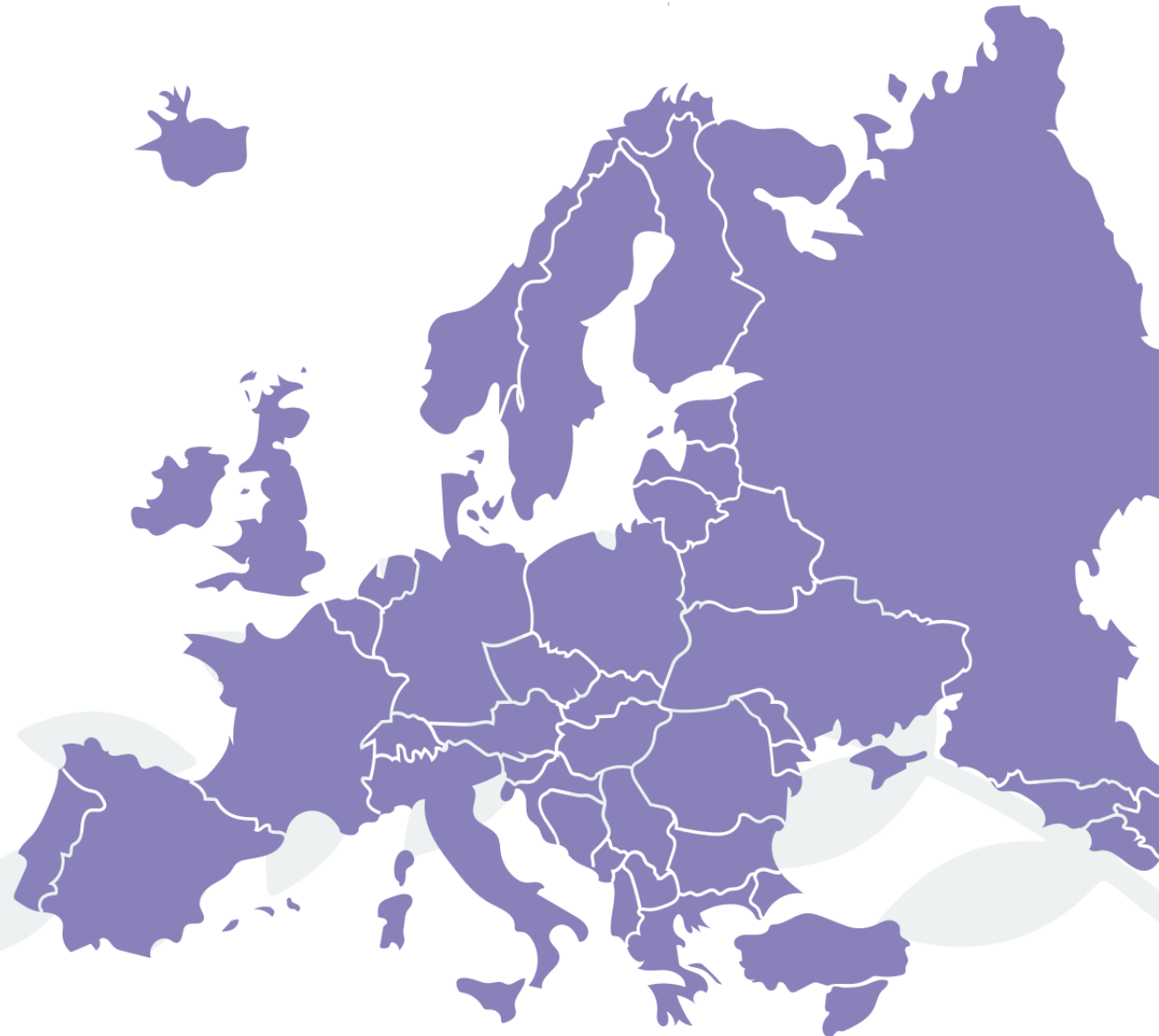
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THE CURRENT CLIMATE OF NURSING IN EUROPE

1. Across Europe, nursing is being reshaped by both systemic and contextual factors.
2. Key trends include Workforce Shortages and Ageing Demographics: Many European countries—such as Germany, Italy, and Finland—face acute shortages due to high retirement rates and insufficient recruitment (OECD Health Data, 2024).
3. Occupational Burnout and Moral Distress: The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated emotional fatigue and moral injury, leading to increased turnover intentions (Schluter et al., 2022)
4. Cross-border Mobility: The free movement of professionals within the EU has created both opportunities and disparities, with migration from Eastern to Western Europe deepening regional inequalities (Aiken et al., 2021).
5. Variable Compensation and Working Conditions: Persistent differences in pay scales, workloads, and professional autonomy continue to undermine retention efforts (European Commission, 2023).
6. These dynamics position nurse retention not only as a workforce management concern but as a socio-scientific challenge that requires research-informed intervention.

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- Evidence-based Interventions: Research identifies modifiable factors—such as supportive leadership, staffing adequacy, and professional development—that improve retention (Van den Heede et al., 2022).
- Theoretical Frameworks: Concepts like Magnet Hospital characteristics and Professional Practice Environments have been applied in European contexts to promote job satisfaction and reduce turnover (Laschinger & Leiter, 2006).
- Psychosocial and Cultural Analysis: Nursing science investigates the interplay between identity, resilience, and well-being, shedding light on why nurses stay—or leave—the profession.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF NURSING SCIENCE CONT:

Policy Translation: Nursing research informs policy design on education, career advancement, and workforce planning—bridging evidence with strategic decision-making at national and EU levels.

In this way, nursing science transforms retention from an administrative issue into a knowledge-driven process that can guide sustainable workforce policies.



Career Perspectives and Professional Development

- Career sustainability is increasingly recognized as central to retention. Contemporary nursing careers are multidimensional, encompassing.
- Clinical advancement through roles such as Nurse Practitioner or Advanced Clinical Specialist.
- Leadership and management pathways that influence health policy and system governance.
- Academic and research trajectories, which strengthen evidence-based care and innovation.

INTERLINKING RETENTION, NURSING SCIENCE, AND CAREER PERSPECTIVES

These three domains—retention, nursing science, and career development—are interdependent:

1. Retention depends on creating environments where nurses can thrive both professionally and personally.
2. Nursing science provides the analytical tools to evaluate these environments and design targeted interventions.
3. Career perspectives sustain motivation, professional identity, and the sense of belonging essential to long-term engagement.

Why Retention Is a Strategic Issue

- **Key Message:**
- Retention is not just about keeping staff — it's about sustaining health systems, advancing science, and building professional futures.
- **Ideas:**
- high turnover to worsened patient outcomes, rising costs, and system fragility (especially post-COVID-19).
- **Setting the scene:** Without investing in retention, nursing science and career development they become irrelevant — & then the question with no stable workforce to apply them.

The Role of Nursing Science in Understanding and Solving Retention

Key Message:

- Nursing science offers evidence-based solutions to the retention crisis.

Ideas:

- Areas of research are on burnout, job satisfaction, autonomy, moral distress, and their impact on retention.
- However, implementation science helps to translate research into workplace

practices.

- Real data/studies: e.g., Magnet hospitals & or EU-funded workforce studies showing improved retention with evidence-based practices.

Career Perspectives: What Nurses Need to Stay and Grow

Key Message:

- Retention improves when nurses have clear, supported career trajectories and feel valued in their professional roles.

Ideas: What are nurses asking for? (Advanced roles, recognition, education access, leadership opportunities)

- Highlighting mismatches: Nurses trained at advanced levels in one EU country may not be recognized in another → frustration + attrition.
 - Link to gender equity: Female-dominated roles often have weaker career ladders and lower pay → impacts retention.
4. How Poor Retention Weakens Career Pathways & Science

High turnover leads to breaks in mentorship, leadership development, innovation, and knowledge transfer.

Ideas: the vicious cycle: Retention drops → senior nurses leave → fewer mentors → junior staff unsupported → further attrition

- Fewer retained nurses = fewer engaged in research, clinical teaching, policy roles → a weakened profession overall.

A Vision for the Future: Aligning Retention, Science, and Career Mobility

Key Message:

- We must build a harmonized European framework that ties retention to: Professional development, Recognition of education/competencies, Research engagement, Mental health support & Cross-border mobility.

Ideas:

- Maybe the WHO–EU Commission Nurse

Action Plan and Bucharest Declaration as opportunities to systematize solutions.

- Propose tools: clinical-academic career pathways, EU-wide credentials, protected time for education/research, investment in mentorship.

CONCLUSION & CALL TO ACTION

1. **Key Message:** To build a sustainable and equitable health workforce, retention must be approached as a scientific, professional, and policy priority.
2. Call to Action; Encourage policymakers to fund nursing research into workforce retention. Advocate for unified recognition frameworks across Europe.
3. Prioritize leadership training and mental health for nurses at all levels.

Take home message



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- We need to re-identify what nursing is in 2025
- We need to own our own space among the disciplines in Healthcare
- We need to assign a value to the nursing care we provide
- We need to lobby for Nursing as a stem subject at all Universities across Europe.



Thank you



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