

"Health Workforce and Care Strategy for the future of Europe"



4 NOV

IN PARTNERSHIP



JOIN US IN DEBATING
SHORTAGE AND
RETENTION OF
HEALTHWORKFORCE

LOCATION: 'L42', RUE DE LOI 42, BRUSSELS

WWW.ESNO-CONGRESS.EU

'European Health Workforce and Care Strategy Forum'

A STRATEGIC DIALOGUE ON NURSING LEADERSHIP, RETENTION, AND SUSTAINABLE HEALTH SYSTEMS

This high-level Brussels event tackles the critical shortage of health professionals, focusing on professionals in the nursing and care domain and doctors with emphasis on the primary and community health domain. Gathering European policymakers, healthcare leaders, and nursing professionals, it seeks to build consensus on harmonizing retention standards to strengthen the workforce professionals. The decline in nursing and doctors has weakened healthcare systems, a trend worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fragmented efforts have failed to provide lasting solutions. Research shows nurses and doctors are more likely to stay when they feel supported, recognized, and empowered—yet disparities in education and certification across Europe fuel instability. The event offers a platform to align perspectives and drive action toward a harmonized framework for nursing retention, career progression, education, and certification. Alongside keynote speakers, 'keynote-listeners, questioners, and responders will encourage active engagement.

Key themes include mental health support, gender equity, and sustainable professional pathways. Evidence shows that when health professionals are recognized, empowered, and mentally supported, they are more likely to stay and thrive.

Participants will explore: Implementation of the WHO–EU Commission Nurse Action Plan and the Bucharest Declaration, best practices in retention with education and other European health workforce program and unified European framework to reduce regional disparities.

THIS EVENT IS ORGANISED BY

- European Specialist Nursing Organisation (ESNO) <https://www.esno.org/>
- Cancer Patients Europe (CPE) <https://cancerpatientseurope.org/>
- European Union of Private Hospitals (UEHP) <https://www.uehp.eu/>
- European Care Home Confederation (E.C.H.O.) <https://www.echo-eu.com/>

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

- The Observatory <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/>
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en>

Draft Program 4 November 2025

08.00	Registration	
09.00 – 09.05	Welcome by hosts: Adriano Friganovic (ESNO), Antonella Cardone (CPE), Ilaria Giannico (UEPH) and Milena Angelova (EESC)	
09.05 – 09.10	Opening : Wording from the SANT committee	MEP Andras Kulja (video) MEP Tilly Metz (TBC)

SETTING THE SCENE: MODERATOR: MATHIAS WISMAR

09.10 – 09.15	World Health Organisation – Europe (WHO) “Capacity building with emphasis on strengthening positions and responsibilities”	Tomas Zapata- WHO (video)
09.15 – 09.30	European Commission DG Sante: “Commission’s support Member States addressing their health systems and workforce challenges”	Dirk van der Steen – DG SANTE
09.30 - 09.45	Perspectives from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) “Increasing retention rates is key to address health workforce shortages”	Gaetan Lafortune – OECD
09.45 – 10.00	Perspective from the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC): Embedding Mental Health and Gender Equity as prerequisite for a sustainable health workforce	Milena Angelova – EESC
10.00 - 10.30	Debate #1: SANT committee (TBC) - European Commission, OECD, Observatory and WHO: Gaetan Lafortune, Tomas London, Milena Angelova, Margrieta Langins, Ilaria Giannico and Rodrigo Gouveia (TruMerit)	Moderating: Matias Wismar
10.30	Coffee break, Networking	

THE SPECTRUM OF THE PROBLEM : MODERATOR: ALICIA SAN JOSE.

11.00	About ESNO and the Patient Safety Program	Patricia Burga (ESNO)
11.05	WHO ‘Nurse Action’ program – “The nurse action plan is to be implemented national, cross nation and disciplines: activities at WHO level”	Margrieta Langins: WHO-Europe (TBC)
11.20	Sigma Europe: “How does Retention connects to science & career perspectives”	Marie-Louse Luiking: chair of Sigma Theta Tau Europe
11.30	Nurses in the advancing evolution: “the ongoing development of the nursing profession, in contrast to paralysis of health systems”	Daniela Lehwaldt / Caroline Bohlander: Lead Advanced Nurse Practitioners
11.40-	Debate #2 – 35 minutes Nurse leaders: Cecile Dury (FINE), Marie Louise Luiking (Sigma-Europe), Mr. van der Steen (DG SANTE) Maurizio Zega (ENC) and Julia To Dutka (TruMerit)	Moderating: Alicia San Jose.
12.15-13.00	Lunch / networking	

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

Breakout A

POLITICAL AND POLICY DIMENSIONS: FROM GOOD PRACTICES TO SYSTEMIC CHANGE

13.00 – 14.00	Presentations with Q&A	Lead: Observatory: M. Wismar and representative Capacity Enhancing Innovation Working Group (TBC) and MEP(s) SANT committee and European Commission
14.00 – 15.00 DEBATES ON BEST PRACTICE AND EXCHANGE	To tackle nurse retention, we need better data, scalable pilots, and applied EU project outcomes. Embedding workforce sustainability in EU Council agendas, engaging the SANT Committee, and securing long-term EU support are key to placing nurses at the heart of resilient, evidence-based health policy.	

Breakout - B

NURSE RETENTION THROUGH GOOD PRACTICES – INSIGHTS AND INNOVATIONS.

13.00 – 14.00	Presentations with Q&A	Lead: Thora Hafsteinsdottir (Sigma Theta Tao) Sigma Theta Tau International. Structural Mentorship as instrument and pre-requisite for success.
14.00 – 15.00 DEBATES ON BEST PRACTICE AND EXCHANGE	Mentorship: Mentoring as an important strategy for the Retention of Nurses. Let's exchange Europe-wide successes, scale best practices, and explore how autonomy, especially in pharma and oncology, strengthens job satisfaction. Embedding supportive workplace, education and development models is key to long-term retention across all specialties.	

Breakout - C

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES: NURSE RETENTION AND INVESTMENTS.

13.00 – 14.00	Presentations with Q&A	Lead: Antonella Cardone (CPE), Gaetan Lafortune (OECD) and Thomas London (Advalent)
	How can legal, fiscal, and budgetary policies prioritize nurse retention? Are global consultancies shaping sustainable strategies? Let's fund people, not just systems, and shift from rigid budgets to long-term investment in workforce wellbeing and resilient health systems. And can an increase of 0.6% of GDP allocated to the health workforce compared to pre-pandemic level on average across the EU as suggested by OECD?	

THE WAY FORWARD – PLENARY

15.15 - 16.45	Debriefing of the sessions 3 x 10 minutes: Global debate with panel and participants: grand tour the table Last half feedback from SANT committee and EU commission.	Mathias and Antonella
16.45 – 17.00	Conclusions and way forward:	Alessandro Stievano & Alicia San Jose
17.00 – 18.00	Cocktail and networking	

REGISTER HERE → [LINK](#)

ORGANISSING COMMITTEE



CO-ORGANISATIONS – EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS



MODERATORS TEAM

- Dr. Alicia San Jose, CEO, European federation of Critical Care Nursing association (EfCCNa)
- Mathias Wismar, Director EU Observatory <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/>
- Ber Oomen, Director, European Specialist Nursing Organisation (ESNO)
- Antonella Cardone (and Josephine Monnet), Director, Cancer Patient Europe (CPE)

OTHER ASPECTS

- A professional photographer will be on site
- The event will be livestreamed, recorded and for post event video creation
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CONFIRMED SPONSORING ORGANISATIONS:

PLATIUM

