

FEPI Response to European Commission's Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health

FEPI is the European Council of Nursing Regulators, bringing together competent authorities responsible for the regulation of the nursing profession in nine Member States. FEPI's main aim is to protect European citizens by securing excellence in nursing competences and practice, professional standards, continuous education and training and codes of conduct.

FEPI welcomes the publication of the Green Paper on the European workforce for health. We would like to make the following points and recommendations relevant to the regulation of the nursing profession across the European Union.

Ageing Populations and Care for the Elderly

Europe's ageing population heightens the need for EU healthcare professionals to develop specific skills relevant to the needs of older people. For this reason, FEPI calls for the development of high level principles on the care for older people in the EU. These principles would need to reflect the requirement to for healthcare professionals to receive training in the communication needs of older people and their specific concerns around dignity and consent. Healthcare professionals must also receive specialist training in areas such as the treatment of dementia and chronic diseases (see below).

Tackling chronic diseases

Demographic changes within Europe are also leading to a rise in the prevalence of chronic diseases. This is a challenge that requires a public health response which reflects the role played by patients in managing their own conditions. It is important that the training and scope of practice of nurses reflects the need for partnership working with patients and communities.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

It is evident that the careers of healthcare professionals will be getting longer in line with increases in longevity and the age of retirement in many Member States. This makes systems of CPD all the more vital. Patients must be assured that healthcare professionals are up-to-date with current practices and regularly receive further training. FEPI would like to see all EU Member States developing systems of CPD and exchanging best practise as to the implementation of such national systems.

Professional Codes of Ethics

Patients across Europe have the right to expect healthcare professionals practise according to clear ethical guidelines. FEPI calls for the development of principles at the EU level on the ethical responsibilities of all healthcare workers (FEPI has already developed a Code of Conduct at European level). These principles should also cover

groups, such as healthcare assistants and support workers, who may not currently be subject to regulation or codes of conduct in all Member States.

Sharing of Best Practice and Information Exchange

FEPI members engage in extensive information and best practice exchange. We would welcome extending such exchanges to include inter-professional dialogue at the European level. This must include resolutions to exchange information about the fitness to practise status of healthcare professionals, especially in light of increasing professional and patient mobility.

Nurses as Entrepreneurs

It should be noted that many nurses across the EU currently work as independent practitioners or as entrepreneurs, for instance in the areas of travel health, cosmetic treatments, domiciliary care services and school nursing.

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