

**WHO Europe
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Joint Statement by NSA: The European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNNMA), The International Council of Nurses (ICN) and The European Nursing Students Association (ENSA)

Agenda item 10

Ageing is living: a strategy for promoting a lifetime of health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030

EFNNMA, ICN and ENSA fully support the WHO Europe strategy, 'Ageing is Living'. This strategy is in line with the Action Plan for the United Nations' Decade of Healthy Ageing. We are aware that the demographic trends described in the document have been well known for quite some time but little improvement in organising optimal care has been achieved. Furthermore, our health workforce is ageing at the same rate as the general population. Therefore, this strategy is long overdue. Nurses and midwives must be involved in the developing and implementing this strategy at all levels, from local to national government.

The twin-track approach of the strategy requires fundamental changes to the structure and delivery of healthcare and social services. Often, health and long-term care systems are not coordinated with each other. Instead of operating in parallel, integration must be achieved to avoid gaps in care and threats to continuity of care, which undermines improvements for people in need. Integrated models of care must be developed to fully engage older people and their families. The financial burden of long-term care is substantial exceeding the budget of even someone with an average pension. Thus, being dependent on long-term care poses a high risk of poverty in old age and increases the deterioration in mental and general well-being.

Nurses are the largest group of healthcare professionals and have the most frequent contact with older people with ill-health, as well as their relatives. Nursing care is vital in maintaining good physical and mental health of older people. Nurses are committed to enabling and supporting older persons to age with dignity. We believe specialised and more independent nursing roles will greatly contribute to achieving the strategy's goals. Advanced practice nurses are often at the front line being the first point of contact and managing the disease process. Examples include geriatric nurse practitioners and primary care nurse practitioners.

The ageing nursing workforce will increase the shortage of nurses. Therefore, a sufficient number of qualified nurses to implement the necessary changes in care delivery is essential. Investment in the nursing workforce and healthy working conditions, and in education will be instrumental to ensuring the availability of an adequate workforce to meet the needs of larger and older populations.

EFNNMA is a non-state actor representing the nursing and midwifery professions in the WHO European region. ICN is a federation of more than 140 national nurses' associations representing 30 million of nurses worldwide. ENSA is a non-state actor and the only organisation representing nursing students in the WHO European Region. Together, we will contribute to this important work. We are committed to supporting the 'Ageing is Living' strategy.