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Item 12 Progress reports: European Immunization Agenda 2030 (EIA2030)

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing more than 30 million nurses worldwide, welcomes the progress report on the European Immunization Agenda 2030 and emphasizes that the active engagement of the nursing workforce in the planning and implementation of immunization programmes is essential to addressing inequities in vaccine access and coverage.

Immunization is one of the most powerful tools we have to protect global health security. Vaccines not only prevent disability, illness, and death, but they also reduce the spread of drug-resistant infections and preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics. Yet, in the face of climate change, migration, conflict, and urbanization, vaccine-preventable diseases can—and do—spread rapidly, placing populations at great risk. Beyond health, immunization has far-reaching benefits for social and economic development. To deliver these outcomes, strong health systems are essential, equipped with reliable supplies and a well-prepared, adequately resourced workforce to ensure safe, effective, and uninterrupted vaccine delivery, even in times of crisis.

Nurses and midwives are at the heart of immunization programmes. They drive integration of immunization with other essential health services, such as postnatal care and infectious disease prevention, and are often the closest point of contact for underserved communities. Their role is particularly critical in reaching the unvaccinated and under-vaccinated populations, including displaced, mobile, and neglected groups. Nurses' involvement in all aspects of vaccinations, and in particular in delivering vaccine information, plays a key role in increasing vaccination rates and reducing vaccine hesitancy. Nurses and midwives have been particularly active in providing information and support to the development of education resources and tools on the importance of vaccination.

ICN further underscores the importance of involving nurses and midwives in data collection, immunization surveillance, and programme monitoring, as their frontline insights are vital for identifying gaps, improving service delivery, and strengthening the overall effectiveness and equity of immunization systems.

ICN urges Member States to adopt laws, regulations, and policies that optimize the use of the nursing workforce and to protect health workers in the delivery of immunization programmes. Nurses must be enabled to practice to the full extent of their education and professional development to expand the reach and effectiveness of vaccination efforts. Equally important is ensuring that nurses and midwives themselves have access to essential immunizations, such as the seasonal influenza vaccine, to safeguard their own health and safety.

ICN also stresses the need for continuous professional development in immunization across the nursing career span, and reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that nurses and midwives everywhere are equipped and prepared to provide vaccines safely and effectively.

Finally, ICN encourages countries to integrate robust strategies to measure and address vaccine hesitancy within national immunization programmes. To achieve the full promise of the European Immunization Agenda 2030, Member States must ensure that nurses and midwives are not only implementers but also co-creators of immunization strategies. Their experience, technical expertise, and trusted relationships with communities are essential to closing coverage gaps and achieving health for all.

****The statement is endorsed by the European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNNMA), a non-state actor representing the nursing and midwifery professions in the WHO European Region.**