

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 9

Innovation Agenda for Public Health in the WHO European Region 2025–2030

The European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations, The International Council of Nurses and the European Nursing Students Association strongly support the resolution to adopt the Innovation Agenda for Public Health in the WHO European Region 2025–2030 and its transformative mega shifts. EFNNMA, ICN and ENSA commit to partnering with the WHO Regional Office for Europe and Member States to ensure that nursing and midwifery professionals are active co-creators, rather than passive recipients, of innovation in the public health agenda and digital transformation.

We believe implementing the Innovation Agenda will strengthen health systems facing converging crises like geopolitical instability, demographic shifts, and post-pandemic fragility. Furthermore, the projected shortage of over 4 million health workers in the region by 2030 necessitates innovation in recruitment and retention strategies. Innovation is needed not only in technology, but also in the structures and processes of healthcare delivery and management.

To have a powerful impact on public health, government regulation is required to support career progression for nurses and midwives from generalist through to specialist and advanced practice roles. The roles of nurses and midwives are expanding, but there is variation across Europe. It is time to recognise the education and competence of nurses and midwives, granting advanced practice nurses and nurse practitioners the right to prescribe and thereby improving access to care in all countries in the European Region.

We urge Member States to enhance the role and influence of Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers at the national level, or to establish such roles where they are not in place. As the frontline healthcare providers closest to patients and communities, nurses and midwives must be included in digital and AI governance structures, including in leadership positions. It is also vital to involve patients and families. This approach will ensure that technological solutions preserve human-centred care, reduce administrative burdens and improve equitable access to quality healthcare services for all.

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 organization representing nursing students in the WHO European Region.