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Item 9 Ageing is living: a strategy for promoting a lifetime of health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030

The European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNNMA), representing the nursing and midwifery professions in the WHO European Region, and the International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing more than 30 million nurses worldwide, fully support Ageing is Living and its alignment with the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.

We welcome its commitment to challenging ageism, promoting health across the life course, and ensuring that older people can live with dignity, autonomy and well-being. We particularly commend WHO for involving older people and carers in developing the strategy and urge Member States to ensure their meaningful participation in national implementation.

Nurses are central to achieving these ambitions. Across primary, community, hospital and long-term care settings, nurses promote health, prevent illness, deliver person-centred care and support continuity across services. Specialist and advanced practice nurses further strengthen access to integrated care, including support for families and carers, working to the full extent of their competencies and authorised scope of practice.

However, the strategy's success depends on the workforce available to deliver it. Population ageing is increasing demand for nursing care while many countries face workforce shortages, retention challenges and an ageing nursing workforce. Without sustained investment in nursing, implementation will be severely constrained.

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EFNNMA and ICN urge Member States to:

- Invest in sustainable nursing workforces, including education, recruitment, retention, safe staffing and decent working conditions, particularly in primary, community and long-term care.
- Include funded nursing workforce measures in national healthy ageing implementation plans, aligned with population needs and supported by measurable indicators.
- Ensure nursing leadership and representation in the development, implementation and monitoring of national strategies, including through Chief Nursing Officers and national nursing associations.
- Enable nurses to practise to their full scope, strengthen integrated multidisciplinary care, and measure nursing's contribution through appropriate nurse-sensitive quality and outcome indicators.

We also call for equity, human rights and action against ageism to be embedded throughout health and care education, professional development and leadership.

EFNNMA, ICN and their member associations stand ready to work with WHO and Member States to translate this strategy into meaningful improvements in health, care and quality of life across the European Region.

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