



Dr Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe opens European Regional Session at ICN Congress

Geneva, Switzerland, 2 November 2021 – Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe and Margrieta Langins, Nursing and Midwifery Policy Adviser, WHO Regional Office for Europe opened the European regional session at the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress today.

Dr Kluge said:

“On behalf of the World Health Organization and the WHO European region, in particular, I want to warmly thank you for your tremendous commitment, for the courage you have shown for the past 20 months. It has been an unimaginably tough time...I recognise that every one of you will have faced challenges and made sacrifices. As you catch your breath before the next call, the next demands, time and time again, you provide thoughtful, patient-centred care, expertise and leadership. The value of your work is immeasurable, not only for the welfare and wellbeing of patients, but for your nursing and medical colleagues and all those working to strengthen health systems.”

Ms Langins added,

“We in the WHO European region see nurses and midwives as accelerators and powerful contributors for improving our health and care systems, but also our societies and our communities...The WHO Regional office for Europe is seeking to amplify the voices of nurses and midwives as these professionals represent the largest part of the health workforce which when given opportunity and support have a far reach, not only in terms of whom they reach, but in how they reach people and communities.”

The session which showcased nurses, nursing and leadership in the European region was moderated by Dr Karen Bjørø, ICN Board Member. Three TED talks by distinguished nursing leaders showed the importance of nursing leadership. Dr. Marjukka Vallimies-Patomäki Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health spoke on *Nursing leadership to transform the nursing workforce – the experience of Finland*. Ms Soledad Gallardo Bonet, CEO, Regional Hospital of INCA, Balearic Islands, Spain followed with a talk on *Leading with charisma: element for transformational leadership*. Finally, Dr Daniela Lehwaldt, Chair, ICN NP/APN Network and Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health, Dublin City University, Ireland spoke on *Leadership – a pillar of advanced practice nursing*.

This was followed by case studies from Iceland, Italy, Sweden, Russia, Estonia, Ireland, Portugal and France, which highlighted the experiences of frontline nurses working in a wide variety of settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A highlight of the session was a panel discussion on the future of nursing leadership with four distinguished European nurse leaders, Dr Karen Bjørø, Professor Dame Anne Marie Rafferty (UK); Ms Edel Marlen Taraldesen (Norway) and Dr Christophe Debout (France). The session concluded with an anthem offered by the General Council of Nursing of Spain to ICN and to all NNAs.

ICN's 2021 Congress is taking place virtually on 2-4 November. For more information and to register go to: <https://icncongress2021.org/>

To access recordings of the European regional session, and the rest of ICN Congress go to: <https://congress2021.icnevents.online/>.

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