

ESNO Communiqué

Nurses in Europe is times of a global Corona Virus health crisis

Introduction

The current global coronavirus pandemic means that we are living in memorable times, with unprecedented health and economic impacts. Who could have predicted that such a tiny microorganism, now dubbed severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), could have potential to paralyse the world economy and jeopardise the entire health system? As European citizens, we have a special sense of pride in all of the nurses working directly and indirectly with patients with COVID-19 in health settings across Europe and around the world; no nurse is excluded. And as nurses, we are committed to doing what we can with the knowledge, resources and equipment that we have available. Our thoughts are not only for ourselves and for our fellow nurses, but also for the patients and their families and friends in difficult and in critical circumstances.

Appreciation

We thank the leaders of the WHO and the European Commission and the overall civil society for expressing their gratitude to the nursing and health professionals in Europe and around the globe and acknowledging that they are working to the best of their ability.

Raising awareness on safety

We are aware that, given the unexpected timing of this virus outbreak and the unparalleled impact on economics and health, there may be gaps in provision for dealing with the situation. This includes standard protocols and the provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). We believe that this health threat confirms the need to invest more attention in the microbiological and infection research because of the personal, local, regional and global impact.

Collaboration

Throughout the outbreak, ESNO has been contacted directly with information about growing tensions, or has heard about these on social media. We regard this as an unavoidable effect of the crisis, and something that we should not look away from. These issues vary from salary negotiations for overtime that put specialist nurses in a less significant position, to neglect of the hygiene guidelines and PPE usages protocols that have been developed by specialist nurses in collaboration with global health institutes. We are also aware of cases where the leadership roles of nurses in Europe, both nationally and cross-border, have been underestimated. As European health is based on collaboration between nations we call for a re-evaluation and exploration of the system of qualification of health providers across Europe.

Nursing in a special year

2020 is the 'Year of the Nurse and Midwife', but European nurses could never have predicted the dramatic way that their frontline roles would be spotlighted. Therefore, and with great respect, we send our thanks to all local, national and global leaders. We thank them for the way that they have acknowledged the role of the nurses, and recognised nurses' expertise, quality of care, and devotion to their roles and patients even at personal risk. We thank all the nurses for their work during these times of crisis. This will not be forgotten.

On behalf of the full ESNO board

Adriano Friganovic, president

Brussels

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The European Specialist Nurses Organisation (ESNO) is a non-profit organisation with the goal to facilitate and provide an effective framework for communication and co-operation between the European Specialist Nurses Organisations and its constituent members. ESNO represents the mutual interests and benefits of these organisations to the wider European community in the interest of the public health. Members of ESNO consist of individual European specialist nurses member organizations and associates, both institutional and individual.

The organisation focuses on enhancing the capacity and capability of specialists nurses to deliver high quality healthcare by raising and harmonize specialist nursing education standards and actively contribute to health themes and threats, providing the best possible expertise, both national and in European cross border context.

www.esno.org

info@esno.org

Rue Belliard 15-17

1040, Brussels

Belgium