



EFN Briefing Note on The Polish Nurses Association conference with Ukraine nurses “Support and investment in Ukrainian nursing - a challenge for the global leaders”



The [2-days conference](#) that [brought together](#) nursing polish leaders, Ukrainian nursing leaders and nursing students, University nursing teachers, EU and international nursing stakeholders, and the Polish Ministry of Health, was a big step forward to plan long term international support with the Ukraine nurse colleagues.

Ukrainian nurses present stressed out how difficult it is to support patients, knowing they are themselves very afraid in times of war. Nursing care in the shelters have been extremely difficult, especially for childcare and elderly care. But nurses/women are strong, being recognised by President Volodymyr Zelensky for their commitment and frontline work in these extremely difficult war conditions.

In order to ensure effective conditions for social and professional assimilation for Ukrainian nurses who decide to either temporarily or permanently settle/work in the country, Poland will provide dedicated support and education programs to enable adaptation and bridging and ensure competence and safety to work as a Registered Nurse to our Ukrainian nurse colleagues. Poland has an extensive experience in the field of equalising the qualification levels of nurses through the system of supplementary studies (about 40 thousand nurses on bridging courses). As such, the polish government is currently discussing an amendment to its national law to introduce bridging courses for Ukrainian nurses. This is a huge achievement of the Polish Ministry of Health, the [Polish Nurses Association](#) (a member of EFN), and the Nurses’ Regulator with the support of the Ukraine Nursing Intelligence Unit, supporting and advising the Ukrainian Minister of Health. All gratitude goes to some Polish Universities who are putting their shoulders into this important initiative.



The development of the bridging courses started when the war in Ukraine began, with the [EFN](#) and [ICN](#) supporting it since its very beginning. Both organisations will now work together with Dr Kateryna Balabanova, Director of the State Agency Center for Nursing Development of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, to make it all happen, and support Ukrainian nurses to rebuild their healthcare system once they go back to Ukraine. This crucial development is creating a win-win situation that should be supported by the European Commission - DG GROW, responsible for Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications ([Directive 2013/55/EU](#)), as the structure of the program will be entirely focusing on the implementation of the provisions in Directive 2013/55/EU, Article 31 (paragraph 7), and will be built with reference to the achievement of the 8 key competences of a general nurse

- It is key that these bridging courses are in line with [the EFN Competency Framework](#), developed in compliance with Directive 2013/55/EU and the upcoming Delegated Act.

Together with 4 Universities, Aleksandra Gaworska-Krzemińska and Izabella Uchmanowicz presented to the Ukrainian nurse leaders the developed bridging courses that should start in January 2023. Supporting the development of the nursing profession through compliance with the European legislation on key points as Education, Workforce, Quality & Safety (including Digitalisation) is an important step forward, as explained by Paul De Raeve, Secretary General of the European Federation of Nurses Associations during the conference.



Bringing 25 Ukrainian nursing leaders, and 20 Ukrainian nursing students from different places in Poland, to Warsaw was a huge endeavour, but we managed to do it. It is vital to build strong collaboration with our Ukraine colleagues. The healthcare system in Ukraine will need to build up and nurses are the frontline change agent in this step forward.

In her [speech](#) towards the European Parliament, Ursula von der Leyen stressed the importance of education and upskilling as well as the need to facilitate the recognition of qualifications – a key issue for the nurses and the nursing profession, due to the huge [nurses' shortage](#) frontline. The educational investment and support offered to Ukrainian nurse refugees will help ensure equal rights and enable them to function safely and competently in the Polish and EU labour market. It is key, with Ukraine being a candidate EU Member State, to invest in Ukrainian nursing as it will strengthen the leadership and development of the nursing profession as part of the reconstruction of the Ukrainian healthcare eco-system after the end of the hostilities.



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