

Brief Summary of the on-line event hold on May 12th 2020, in the Year of the Nurse and Midwife and the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.

#Caring4Nurses: Joining together to give nurses a voice

The value of specialist nurses has never been more important than in 2020. Critical care nurses, anaesthesia nurses and emergency nurses are on the frontline of the battle against COVID-19. We must do everything to support them and give them a voice at Europe's highest tables, not just today but also long after the applause has stopped.

That was the clear message coming from a virtual event organised by the European Specialist Nurses Organisation (ESNO) and moderated by ZN. The celebration of the 200th anniversary of the [birth of Florence Nightingale](#) and International Nurses Day also marked the launch of ESNO's [#Caring4Nurses](#) campaign. More than 70 nurses around the world met online for almost two hours on the afternoon of the 12th of May.

Inspiring words

[Maria Teresa Parisotto](#), Executive Director at ESNO, opened the celebrations by highlighting their importance: "We could not let this day pass without celebration. Because this is our day. A day of celebration. A day of awareness. And a day when we must be proud to be nurses."



positive patients stopped increasing after two weeks."

After ESNO's President, [Adriano Friganović](#), talked of how ESNO "promotes and represents the interest of specialist nurses in Europe", he spoke of the critical role nurses played when an earthquake hit his town in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. The picture he painted was unimaginable with patients evacuated in cars and a mother ventilating her child. He described how "preventing transmission was difficult. People were scared to go back inside. But the number of

Expanding on the vital role nurses played, he said: "In this crisis, specialised nurses were crucial, and I personally hope that fact will remain in the minds of the people who govern the European Union."



A poll launched by ZN Hypermoderator Liora Kern showed that the majority of participants felt the increased appreciation would last.

Moreover, the audience thought COVID-19 will reshape the nurse profession.

Recognising nursing in policy-making

Anne Felton from the Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND) took Adriano's point one step further, highlighting the need for "nursing in all its domains" to be present in every healthcare policy: "Every speciality in nursing today must be recognised from a statutory point of view."

She used Florence Nightingale as an example to also tell how nursing specialities need to be equipped to bring the expertise of political influence because nurses have to "speak to other disciplines, to other organisations, and to listen carefully to those who do not agree with us because that will enrich us".



But it was her thoughts on how COVID-19 has placed nurses in uncharted territories that were really eye-opening: "Intensive care nurses and anaesthetic nurses have had to throw out the book. They are practising at the very edge of non-evidence-based nursing because that is what this condition has imposed on us."

On a question of Carmel Clancy, representing European nurses in Addiction [IntSNA](#) on Mental Health related to Corona, Anne stresses to include indeed the Mental Health impact on the corona, not only for the patients but also in supporting the family members.



Representing the European Nurse Directors Association, [Alessandro Stievano agreed](#), saying nurses should be "at the table where the decisions are made". Again using Florence Nightingale as an example, he talked of how "she initiated great efforts to raise awareness about our profession during those difficult years".

Alessandro spoke of how Florence was "a big leader with a global vision" who had a "macro vision, mezzo vision and also the micro vision". He emphasised how today's nurse leaders needed those levels of vision so

they can “be involved in policy and planning decision-making at the highest level to ensure our overstretched healthcare system can provide the best possible care”.

Nurses are suffering

A critical care nurse herself, [Bronagh Blackwood](#), President of the European Federation of Critical Care Nursing associations (EFCNNA), spoke for nurses from all disciplines now working in intensive care: "They have been scared. They have felt out of their depth. They have had to develop new skills along the way – and pretty fast”.

The most moving part of her speech was when she revealed that she felt uncomfortable with the public calling critical care nurses heroes and angels. "A hero is noted for a courageous act, such as saving a life. Critical care nurses, we do this every day. An angel is immortal. This is not a critical care nurse. We do die. And there have been many nurses who have died”.

Bronagh called on countries and governments to appreciate the value of highly trained critical care nurses. "We are not supernatural. We also suffer," she said. "Governments should recognise that we need care and compassion too. They have to give us their support.”



Now is the time for nurses



[Adrian van den Hoven](#), Director General at Medicines for Europe, began by highlighting that "the value of the nurse in the healthcare system has never been more important than in 2020". He told of sleepless nights worrying about whether medicine providers would be able to "expand productive capacity quickly enough to meet the huge increase in demand for ICU medicines such as sedatives and muscle relaxers for patients going onto mechanical ventilation.”

Nurses like Bronagh, he said, have played a critical role in ensuring organisations that supply medicines have been able to understand and meet that surge in demand. "The future is very critical," he concluded. "I am very excited to hear the thoughts of the nurses here today.”



We heard from our
PANEL OF NURSES

The panel of nurses from across Europe talked more of the challenges of COVID-19. [Eva Barkestad](#) from Sweden described how she in her 36 years as an ICU nurse has "never ever experienced something like COVID-19". Talking from her garden in Belgium, Josefine Declaye spoke of the success of the COVID-19 [WhatsApp group](#) she started to "create a sense of belonging

among nurses". In Italy, [Cristiano Magnaghi](#) said that now is the time for nurses everywhere to say "I'm here, I exist, and I'm here for you – and maybe the people can change their vision of us".

Coming together

Maria Teresa concluded the event with some take home messages "all of us need to take the responsibility of promoting the nurse profession. It is time to speak up. It is time to leave the modesty behind. It is time to position ourselves in the centre of the scene. Nobody can do it for us. We are the owner of our future."



The phenomenal feedback showed just how vital nurses found the opportunity to come together:

COMMENTS FROM OUR AUDIENCE

BJ Rice
#SoProudToBeANurse

Christine Willems
Thank you very much ESNO for this interesting webinar and this fantastic event :-)

Noel Abela
Highly motivating event. Thanks to all the speakers for their inspiring messages.

Carmel Clancy
 excellent event - congratulations and thank you colleagues - very inspiring. I am excited to be part of ESNO and it will be through collaboration that we will progress and do our best.

The virtual event marked the launch of the year-long #Caring4Nurses campaign. Watch the full event or take a peek at the highlights video.

Thanks to all speakers and moderators for the excellent work done, for the touching and inspiring words and for showing the heart and the soul of the nurses. And remember, Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM), so let's work together for a better patient care, by #Caring4nurses".

Date to remember:

1. February 26th, of 2021 [ESNO Congress](#) in Brussels.
2. May 12th, 2021 the conclusion of this vitally important campaign in Brussels.

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.

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