



EUROPEAN RESEARCH NURSING FOUNDATION

Activity Report 2021

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Foreword | p. 3 |
| I. EU Health & Research Agenda | p. 4 |
| II. Governance | p. 5 |
| III. Activities | p. 7 |
| IV. Reference Points Network..... | p. 10 |
| V. Communication | p. 11 |
| VI. Conclusion | p. 13 |

Foreword

Dear ENRF Reference Points,
Dear EFN Members,
Dear Colleagues,

We were hoping that 2021 would have been better than 2020, but Covid-19 waves have decided otherwise. Looking back at 2021, we can say that this has again been a tough year for nurses around the world, as they continue to work hard to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, with lots of lessons learned, which will be central to moving health care forward. From an EU perspective, it became clear that health care research is a top priority for the European Citizens and EU policy agenda, and that we are at a crucial moment for the future of EU nursing research. Nursing researchers have here a unique opportunity to get involved in EU developments and ensure that EU policy makers are aware of the benefits of nursing research.

These last few months have been very important for the future of the EU research, namely with the launch of the new European Commission Research Framework Programme – Horizon Europe, and its calls for proposals. For the ENRF and the nursing research community it is crucial to see a concrete support to health and nursing research. In these very difficult times, there is a growing appreciation of the importance of research in the health field and how fundamental it is to innovate to strengthen health systems and find solutions to face any crisis.

In this very difficult but promising context, the ENRF continued its work of setting the future of the EU nursing research, by monitoring the work of the EU Institutions and focussing on integrating nursing research into the EU policy arena, in line with ENRF SORP 2021-2024. Informing the EU policy design, based on existing nursing research, and by engaging nursing researchers, to help to promote the sustainability of European healthcare systems by contributing new knowledge for EU health policies, such as the prevention of disease and the promotion of health is crucial.

The ENRF will continue, in 2022, screening and informing its nursing researchers' contact points on the latest key developments linked to research at EU level, crucial for nursing research and its developments, and pushing to get the nursing research set the scene at EU level. The ENRF will take every opportunity to ensure that EU policy makers are aware of the benefits of nursing research, and the need to rely on those when making decisions that affect the nursing professions. This is a very crucial moment for the EU research future.

It is with great pleasure that we present you this ENRF Activity Report 2021, giving an overview of its progresses and achievements made during the year.

Hope you enjoy reading it.

Best Regards,

Prof Dame Anne Marie Rafferty
ENRF President

Dr Paul De Raeve
ENRF Secretary General

I. EU HEALTH & RESEARCH AGENDA

"It is essential to carefully choose the necessary scientific and technical excellence to success in a very competitive selection process as Horizon Europe" **Peter Haertwich**,
Head of Unit for Research and Innovation at European Commission.



As part of its [SORP 2021-2024](#), and as in the previous years, the ENRF followed very closely, in 2021, the latest discussions and developments as regards health & research EU agenda, taking into account the new EU Framework programme - [Horizon Europe](#) - launched in January, with 95.5 billion euro allocated for funds in research and innovation. In this context, the nursing researchers will play a leading role in the creation of a more innovative, digital and resilient health system able of facing all the new challenges that will arise.

Once again, nurses will have to take the field to implement this new transformation. To make it “fit-for-purpose”, nursing research has a key role to play in the development of this new EU Health Research Programme that would focus on improving health conditions across all EU Member States through better prevention, access, and treatment. This is an opportunity to take advantage of all these funds available to strengthen nursing research, and make change happen for the EU Health systems.

To make sure that the nurse researchers and the EFN Members were prepared for this [Horizon Europe](#) calls, namely under “[Cluster Health](#)”, the ENRF participated in several key events at EU level (See *meetings section, page 8*), and reported the key information to the EFN Members and the ENRF Reference Points through some Briefing Notes, namely:

- ✓ [Horizon Europe – Get Yourself Prepared and Engaged](#) (February 2021)
- ✓ [Horizon Europe for Health](#) (February 2021)
- ✓ [Horizon Europe – Follow-up](#) (March 2021)
- ✓ [Gender Equality in Horizon Europe](#) (April 2021)
- ✓ [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) - #1 (May 2021)
- ✓ [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) - #2 (September 2021)
- ✓ [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) - #3 (October 2021)

More ENRF Briefing Notes on the topic are available on [ENRF Website](#).

The ENRF will continue following this up very closely in 2021 and seek opportunities for collaboration under Horizon Europe.

II. GOVERNANCE

In terms of governance, all EFN Members are entitled to nominate and elect the ENRF Board of Directors (BoD) composed by four representatives (1 Founding Director and 3 Directors elected by the EFN Members), and the ENRF Secretary General. The ENRF Board of Directors is responsible for defining the ENRF priorities and outcomes in accordance with the ENRF mission, vision and constitutional aims, included in the [ENRF Strategic and Operational Research Plan 2021-2024](#) that contains a set of values, content and theme for the Foundation to work on.

A. Board Members (2020-2022)

The ENRF [governing body](#) is currently composed by three Directors for a 2-year mandate (2020-2022), + the ENRF Secretary General:

- **Founding EFN Director and ENRF President:**



Anne Marie Rafferty
Royal College of Nursing - UK

- **EFN Directors:**



Izabella Uchmanowicz
Wroclaw Medical University – Poland
ENRF Vice-President



Andreas Xyrichis
King's College London – UK
ENRF Treasurer

- **ENRF Secretary General:**



Paul De Raeve

Taking into account that the mandate of the current ENRF Board of Directors is coming to an end, elections will take place in January 2022, to (re-)elect the Board of Directors. All the EFN Members are entitled to nominate and elect four Directors, of which one is the Founding Director, representing the EFN voice.

B. Board of Directors meetings 2021

In 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors met on: **1st February (Online)** to reflect on the work done so far, and on the activities to be done in 2021, setting up some key priorities, as: finalise the revision of the ENRF Constitution as approved by the EFN October 2019 General Assembly, in Greece; develop a 4th Policy Brief on Advanced Practice Nurse; and develop a Stakeholder & Policy Mapping. The BoD also approved the 3 Evidence-Based [Policy Briefs](#) 'Care left Undone', 'Digitalisation', 'Nursing Mentorship', developed in 2020; the [ENRF SORP 2021-2024](#); and the ENRF Budget Plan 2021-2024; **20 May (Online)** where the ENRF Directors discussed the ongoing work as approved at the previous BoD meeting (1st February); **31 August (Online)** where the ENRF Directors discussed and approved several documents, including the revised ENRF Constitution and the ENRF Stakeholder & Policy Mapping. The ENRF Directors also discussed the 4th Policy Brief being developed and suggested some amendments to it. This document is being amended and should be available soon; **14 December (Online)** where the ENRF Directors discussed the next steps for their work in 2022, including the ENRF Budget plan for 2022.



i. EFN Executive Committees & General Assemblies

As done since its establishment, the EFN Executive Committee and the EFN Members through the General Assemblies were, in 2021, continuously informed on the ENRF ongoing work and developments, and the ENRF Directors' reflections. The EFN Executive Committee and the EFN Members are very happy with to see the amount of good quality work that has been produced in such short time, aligning and enhancing the work of EFN.

C. ENRF Brussels Office

In 2021, the ENRF Brussels Office, consisting of the Secretary General and the Secretary, supported by consultants in the area of Accounting, Social Security System, Web and IT management, Legal Affairs and on specific health, research & innovation policy areas, continued focussing on implementing the [ENRF SORP 2021-2024](#). Translating the EU political journey into the 'language' of the nursing researchers, through the ENRF Website news, ENRF Newsletters, and Briefing Notes, bridges the distance between Brussels and the EU nursing researchers. Informing and keeping them up to speed is essential to put them in an advanced position to take nursing research & innovation further at EU and national level. As such, having an Office in Brussels equipped with highly educated and motivated staff, and empowering researchers to exchange views on specific EU health, research & innovation areas, are key for the ENRF Office.

Over the year, the ENRF Office also made sure that all the administration burden was up to date and complying with the Belgium and the EU legislation (Moniteur Belge, Mensura, Social Security, EU transparency registry, etc.), taking into account all the updates to be made and the regular information requested by both the Belgium administration and the European Commission.

Although 2021, as 2020, was challenging for the nurses all over the globe, with a whole profession relentlessly caring for millions of citizens due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the ENRF continued taking forward its activities started in 2020 of setting the future of the EU nursing research, by monitoring the work of the EU Institutions and focussing on integrating nursing research into the EU policy arena. Bringing the nursing researchers' knowledge together to strengthen the delivery of evidence-based nursing to add rigour and credibility to the political decision-making and outcomes is key, knowing that nursing research is a growing field even though it remains a relatively new activity in many countries.

In compliance with the agreement of the October 2019 EFN General Assembly, in Greece, due to EFN Members reflection on the future of the Foundation, the ENRF 2021 activities were kept to the minimum level of legal requirements, and to the minimum level expected by the European Commission, to not limit or harm potential future activities, until a full decision is taken by the EFN General Assembly on the ENRF future. Which means for the ENRF Office the circulation of only 3 Newsletters over the year, less Briefing Notes, attending less meetings, no social media, etc. But keeping always the EFN members, the ENRF Board of Directors and the ENRF Reference Points informed on the key topics for nursing research ongoing discussions at central moments, and developing some key documents as agreed by the EFN Members in 2019.

A. Policy Briefs

This is one of the main achievements for the ENRF in 2021. The ENRF cooperates closely with the EFN to understand the research evidence the EFN needs to underpin EFN political lobby objectives, and as such prioritise ENRF research activities, and generate knowledge and evidence to support the work of EFN. As agreed by the October 2019 EFN General Assembly, in Greece, the ENRF has been requested to develop a few Policy Briefs, as first ENRF activities' concrete outcome, to support the EFN Members and EFN EU lobby process. As such, and in follow-up of the work started in 2020, the ENRF approved so far 3 Policy Briefs in areas of scientific and political interest, linked to the current health research priorities in the European Union: [Care left Undone](#); [Digitalisation](#); [Nursing Mentorship](#), and is currently developing a 4th one on Advanced Practice Nurse – in parallel to the EFN work on this topic. These Policy Briefs aim to support the EFN lobby work towards the EU institutions and the ENRF developments. As a next step in this process, the ENRF Board of Directors is already looking at the work to be developed in 2022 and foresees the development of two more Policy Briefs linked to the EFN lobby agenda/work: “violence against nurses” and “nurses' role in planetary health”.



B. Review of the ENRF Constitution

Following up on the reflections of the EFN Members over 2019 on the future of the ENRF, the EFN Members approved in October 2019, to review the ENRF Constitution, taking into account the recommendations of the EFN Working Group on the future of the ENRF, and of the EFN Executive Committee. This has been done by the ENRF BoD over 2020 and 2021. The final version of the ENRF revised Constitution was discussed and approved by the ENRF Directors at their BoD meeting in

August 2021, and by the EFN Executive Committee in September 2021, and was presented to the EFN General Assembly, in October 2021.



C. Stakeholder & Policy Mapping

The ENRF overall objective is to bring its research priorities to the attention of the European Commission and by doing so influence the EU political agenda (See [EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#) & [ENRF SORP 2021-2024](#)). As such, it is important to understand the political dynamics of policy making and to have in mind who is doing what at EU level and who to be in close contact with to influence the agenda setting. Looking at the ENRF Action Plan and Priorities for 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors discussed and approved, at their meeting in February 2021, the need to have a stakeholders' & policy mapping for one of the ENRF priorities, to help analyse, understand, and create effective strategies to promote ENRF SORP and [Policy Briefs](#), and providing an overview on the policy actors to be in touch with to influence research policy and support EFN work.

At their meeting in May 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors discussed a 1st draft proposal and agreed to have a 2nd version focussing only on Digitalisation as a follow-up of the [EFN event on digitalisation](#) in the European Parliament, February 2020 – seen as a good case study to start such mapping, as it links to a successful event. At their meetings in August 2021 and in December 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors discussed the revised version of the document, seen as a good and useful document, but believe that some more time is needed to finalise this mapping document to make it stronger, so that it can be used as a strategic roadmap to influence the EU policymakers, politicians and stakeholders. Thus, the ENRF will continue working on this development in 2022.

D. Input to the European Commission Consultations

Answering European Commission consultations is a great opportunity to increase the ENRF visibility and making sure the nursing researchers' voice is heard at political level. As such, the ENRF always provides [input](#) to the European Commission consultations when seen relevant. Unfortunately, in 2021 due to the COVID-19 ongoing crisis, no major EU consultations were made available for the ENRF to provide input.

E. Building Alliances

Building alliances and creating partnerships, next to strengthening the ones already established with key EU stakeholders and EU policy decision-makers is key for an organisation to grow and to achieve concrete outcomes. As example, the ENRF participated in several European Commission events on Horizon Europe, to explore where the ENRF and nursing research could fit to support the future research agenda (*See below the meetings the ENRF participated in*). The ENRF will continue to participate in key EU events and look to build reliable alliances with key EU health and social Stakeholders, and policy and decision-makers, to ensure that nursing research gets higher on the EU Research and Innovation Agenda. The ENRF Office will continue this important alliance building in 2022, mainly in the context of [Horizon Europe](#), that can bring key alliances within EU projects and policy developments on nursing research and innovation. The ENRF Office will continue this important alliance building in 2022.

F. Meetings

Invited to key meetings, the ENRF Board and ENRF Secretary General, have been taking the opportunity to raise nursing research, to make the Foundation known, including how and why it has

been established, its aims and objectives, and how the ENRF and the nursing research can contribute to the EU debate.

Below some examples, just to name a few, of the meetings the ENRF Office attended in 2021:

- [Enspire Science Live Webinar on Horizon Europe](#), on 4 February 2021, that explained the Horizon Europe funding mechanism and how to prepare for an EU project.
- [EANS winter 2021 e-Summit](#), on 19 February 2021, that brought together nurse scientists from across Europe and worldwide to discuss and increase the understanding of nursing research in its various contexts within and outside Europe, during the current era of web-based meetings and communication. The ENRF Secretary General explained how the ENRF can influence the EU through nursing research, and the need to work with the nurses' communities and researchers to go into Horizon Europe and get more money for nurses.
- [NCP Brussels Workshop "Health across Horizon Europe"](#), on 11 March 2021, that provided basic understanding on what to expect from Horizon Europe for health research and innovation, to better assess opportunities and start preparing proposals accordingly.
- [Workshop EU4Health Programme 2021](#), on 24 March 2021, with the objective to explore potential solutions for EU-wide health challenges under the four strands of the Programme through stakeholders' input.
- [Webinar "A successful proposal for Horizon Europe"](#), on 21 April 2021, that provided details on the preparation of a proposal for Horizon Europe.
- [Webinar on "Horizon Europe: Health Cluster"](#), on 26 April 2021, that provided key information on the new framework programme and the "health cluster".
- **Citizens Science: involvement of citizens in co-creating science agenda**, on 4 May 2021, where participants discussed how important it is to involve citizens in science projects, as they can share impactful ideas so that scientific outcomes respond to the needs and expectations of the society.
- [Horizon Europe - Meeting on "A successful proposal for Horizon Europe"](#), on 7 May 2021, aiming to provide information to potential applicants to Horizon Europe calls on preparing their proposals. The meeting focussed on better understanding what the needed steps are to present a successful proposal for Horizon Europe.
- [Horizon Europe – Cluster Health - info day](#), on 2 July 2021, that provided (potential) applicants with key information on the topics included in the Cluster 1 'Health' work programme of 2021.
- [Meeting on European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority \(HERA\)](#), on 16 September 2021, where Vice President Margaritis Schinas and Commissioners Stella Kyriakides and Thierry Breton presented HERA as a structural solution to be prepared to face future health crisis. All the initiatives together will back up the new health preparedness and resilience mission, with HERA at its core. This represents an investment of around €50 billion.
- [Up-skilling & Reskilling as part of the well-being of the European Workforce](#), on 2 November 2021, that made an in-depth analysis on the new future skills necessary to be acquired in the coming years, with a main focus on digital skills.
- [European Citizens' Panels of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#), on 21 November 2021, to which the ENRF Secretary General, Paul De Raeve, was invited as expert to share his knowledge and expertise with the citizens participating in the European Citizens' Panel, on "Climate change, environment and health - Reinforce the healthcare system" session. From a Health Research perspective, it was suggested focussing, especially now with the pandemic, on

unmet needs, citizen's needs, holistic needs, not just medical needs. Nursing research will be therefore key within Horizon Europe.

IV. REFERENCE POINTS NETWORK

The aim of the Foundation is to foster the dialogue between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers/politicians, in order to build a common research capacity by providing concrete solutions for reformed health and social care systems with a highly skilled, motivated and qualified nursing care workforce, as set out in the EFN Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan ([SOLP](#)). It is therefore important to establish links with various national reference points, nominated by the EFN members across Europe, which will enable the ENRF to have a direct link to national nursing researchers and other academics in the field of nursing.

Close collaboration gives benefits to both parties: giving the ENRF a link to all EU Members States strengthening the ENRF capacity to support EFN EU policy work, and the national reference points get more visibility at European level and as such increase their research potential to respond to the main health issues in Europe. The National Reference Points also have opportunities to collaborate on research bids with colleagues across Europe: the ENRF becoming a facilitator for research, not a competitor.

On the other hand, for the European Commission it is key to know 'who' is behind the Foundation and who it represents and collaborates with. On regular basis the ENRF Brussels' Office is requested by the European Commission to provide this information, to keep ENRF on the [transparency register](#) and as such have access to EU Civil Servants and Institutions.

Therefore, building an internal nursing research reference points network is key to show to the EU Institutions that the ENRF is a strong network of individual nursing researchers, appointed by the National Nurses Associations, bringing in their independent research and innovation ideas and views into the ENRF and as such influence the European Commission Research and Innovation Agenda. As such, the EFN Members regularly provide input to this list, making sure this is updated and as accurate as possible. This is the strength of the ENRF which can build their capacity to get to the EU Institutions.

In 2021, the ENRF Office made sure to provide the reference points with as much information as possible on ongoing EU developments on research that could be helpful for nursing research, through the ENRF Briefing Notes, Newsletters, Press Releases, etc. the ENRF Office circulated to them and to the EFN Members.

The ENRF will continue building on this network in 2022.

V. COMMUNICATION

Crucial to enhance effectiveness, communicating on the ENRF activities is crucial for making it visualised, and to get the message across, and to engage ENRF reference points to the work of the ENRF and to make the Foundation more visible, especially at EU level. In 2021, in order to share important information on nursing research at EU level, the ENRF Board of Directors, the ENRF Reference Points, and the EFN members, received on regular basis the ENRF [Briefing Notes](#), and the [ENRF Newsletter](#). The ENRF Office also regularly updated the [ENRF Website Homepage](#).

✎ ENRF Website

Updated on regular basis with key information/news, the ENRF Website (www.enrf.eu) is aiming at making the Foundation more visible. Next to a Homepage with news and events' overview, the ENRF Website also provides information on its history, governing body, Constitution and Internal Regulation, mission and objectives, and Dissemination (Newsletters, Briefing Notes, Press Releases, input to the EU, articles). The Website is managed by the Brussels' Office and will evolve as the Foundation will.



✎ ENRF Newsletter

On a regular basis, when significant information is available, the ENRF publishes its Newsletter that refers to the main news for nurse researchers/nursing research at EU level that can support and influence their daily work. In 2021, the ENRF Office published 3 Newsletters: [April 2021](#), [July 2021](#), and [November 2021](#). All ENRF Newsletters are available at: <http://www.enrf.eu/dissemination/newsletter/>

✎ ENRF Briefing Notes

Seen as a way to provide information on key meetings and latest developments at EU level to the ENRF Board of Directors, the ENRF Reference points, and the EFN Members, the ENRF Office published in 2021 several key Briefing Notes: [Agreement on the EU Social Fund](#) (February 2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Yourself Prepared and Engaged](#) (February 2021); [Horizon Europe for Health](#) (February 2021); [Horizon Europe – Follow-up](#) (March 2021); [EU4Health Programme](#) (March 2021); [Gender Equality in Research & Innovation](#) (April 2021); [Gender Equality in Horizon Europe](#) (April 2021); [Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values \(CERV\) work programme 2021-2022](#) (April 2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) (May 2021); [Erasmus+](#) (May 2021); [Citizens Science – Involvement of citizens in co-creating Science Agenda](#) (June 2021); [Horizon](#)



[Europe - Get Prepared for Submission](#) (September 2021); [EU4Health 2022 Programme](#) (September 2021); [Switzerland supporting dialogue to create a research centre in south-eastern Europe](#) (September 2021); [Horizon Europe – Get Prepared for Submission](#) (October 2021); [MEPs pushing for academic freedom in EU treaties](#) (November 2021). All ENRF Briefing Notes are all available on [ENRF Website](#).

Social Media

The Foundation is also present on social media, namely on: Twitter (@Enrf_Foundation), Facebook (@enrf.foundation), and YouTube (ENRF Foundation). Even if at this stage the ENRF does not have yet a lot of followers, the few posts/tweets reach quite a lot of people. Due to scoping down ENRF activities as agreed by the EFN members at the October 2019 EFN General Assembly, the ENRF was not active on social media in 2021. We are sure that these numbers will increase as the work of the Foundation will develop.

VI. CONCLUSION

For almost over two years now we have all been living in a different and challenging reality, and especially our nursing colleagues and frontline professionals. Research has been playing a key role – not only in creating a COVID-19 vaccine, but also in supporting and evaluating nursing innovations. All over Europe, and the world, the key players, including nurses, continue to work hard to overcome this health crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed how much it is essential to be prepared to face sudden challenges and prevent any future crisis. Planning, and have fit-for-policies, is fundamental to ensure that all the Member States can respond to any upcoming crisis. A lot can be achieved via the EU research programs and by further considering the concept of ‘health in all policies’. In this, the ENRF and the nurse researchers can have a key role to play.

Looking at the future, investing in research and innovation is investing in Europe’s future, in knowledge and new solutions to maintain and improve the European way of life. Nursing research is very important in the transformation of healthcare, to ensure that the solutions discovered and applied are fit-for-purpose and suitable for the end-user/nurses. And the ENRF, who will continue in 2022 to follow closely on this, is in a key position to ensure that the development of any system, program, guidelines, etc. is in line with the EU, national & local requirements.

Founded by the EFN in May 2013, within the context of the increasing emphasis placed on nursing research at EU level to secure reliable evidence from which to base future workforce decisions, the European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF) aims to form a bridge between evidence and policy-making process and act as a contact point for EU policymakers and politicians. The Foundation has the ambition to become a reference point and add value to nursing research, translating knowledge into health policy, thus enhancing the EU health policy agenda.

Contact Details

European Nursing Research Foundation

Prof. Dr Paul De Raeye

ENRF Secretary General

Clos du Parnasse 11B – 1050 Brussels – Belgium

Tel: +32 2 511 34 84

Email: enrf@enrf.eu

Web: www.enrf.eu

Registration Number: 533.978.961

Transparency Register: 067386320464-72