



EUROPEAN RESEARCH NURSING FOUNDATION

Activity Report 2023

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Foreword

Dear ENRF Reference Points,

Dear EFN Members,

Dear Colleagues,

Once again, we present you the ENRF Activity Report, providing an overview of the Foundation progresses and achievements over 2023.

Over the year, the ENRF continued to build on the work started in the previous years, and to follow on key EU research and innovation developments bringing valuable information to the EFN Members and the ENRF Reference Points. Nursing research and researchers are key to move from EU research fragmentation and the lack of coherence towards impactful and outcome-oriented research outcomes with a key focus on exploitation.

Unfortunately, this will be the last Activity Report for the Foundation. After a long reflexion, the EFN members decided to close down the ENRF. We therefore would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you - EFN members, ENRF Reference Points network, and all the stakeholders with whom we have built a trustful alliance - for all the hard work done over these last years. This has been a very good opportunity to make nursing research known at EU level. We trust that a lot has been done as regards nursing research to support the nursing profession, but a lot still remains to be done knowing how hard it has been so far for the nurses all around Europe and the world.

Hope you enjoy reading the 2023 Activity Report.

Best Regards,

Prof Dame Dr Anne Marie Rafferty

ENRF President

Prof Dr Paul De Raeye

ENRF Secretary General

I. EU HEALTH & RESEARCH AGENDA



As in the previous years, and as part of its Strategic and Operational Research Plan ([SORP 2021-2024](#)), the ENRF followed closely, the developments on the health & research EU agenda, and in particular [Horizon Europe](#). Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a [budget of €95.5 billion](#).

The Horizon Europe facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports creating and better dispersing of excellent knowledge and technologies.

Nursing research can bring a strong contribution to the EU Health Research Programme focusing on improving health conditions across all the EU Member States through better prevention, access, and treatment. Investing in nursing research and development is a key step towards building strong and resilient health systems capable of dealing with future health crises. The funds allocated by the European Union represent a great opportunity for research and development.

To ensure that the nurses' researchers and the ENF Members are prepared for the new Horizon Europe calls, namely under "[Cluster Health](#)", the ENRF followed closely these developments, participating in some meetings at EU level on the topic, and reporting the key information on this to the ENRF nurse researchers and the ENF members through:

- ▶ [ENRF Briefing Notes](#) (sent by email & available on ENRF Website): [Horizon Europe – Cluster 1](#) (02/06/2023); [UK researchers to join again Horizon Europe in 2024](#) (20/09/2023).
- ▶ [ENRF Website homepage](#): [Horizon Europe – Cluster 1: Research info days](#) (09/01/2023); [Horizon Europe Health single stage calls for proposals](#) (06/02/2023); [Horizon Europe Proposal – How to succeed](#) (16/05/2023); [Horizon Europe – A world of opportunities](#) (22/05/2023); [Guide to EU Funding - 2023](#) (28/06/2023); [Horizon Europe: London and Brussels have a deal!](#) (08/09/2023).
- ▶ [ENRF Newsletters](#) (sent by email & available on ENRF Website): [May 2023](#).

More than ever, we need evidence to support policy to respond to the many challenges faced by society, including the EU nurses. For the ENRF and the nursing community it is crucial to see a concrete support to health and nursing research. Using Horizon Europe funds to boost, support and improve nursing research is a great opportunity to create a more resilient healthcare system.

II. GOVERNANCE

The ENRF Board of Directors (BoD) is responsible for defining the policies and priorities of the Foundation in accordance with its mission, vision and constitutional aims, included in the [ENRF strategic plan \(2021-2024\)](#) (SORP) that contains a set of values, content and theme for the Foundation to work on. All EFN Members are entitled to nominate and elect the ENRF Board of Directors (BoD).

A. Board Members (2022-2024)

The ENRF [governing body](#) is currently composed by three Directors, re-elected in January 2022 for a 2-year mandate (2022-2024), and the ENRF Secretary General, Paul De Raeve:

Founding EFN Director and ENRF President:



Anne Marie Rafferty
King's College London - 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
ENRF Secretary General

B. Board of Directors meetings 2022

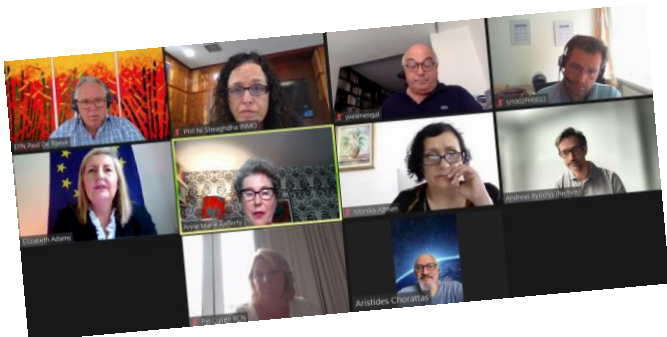
In 2023, the ENRF Board of Directors (BoD) met on:

- **11 January (Online)** – The BoD took this opportunity to reflect on the work done so far, and on the activities to be done in 2023, focussing the ENRF SORP, the development of the ENRF Stakeholders & Policy Mapping, the ENRF Communication tools' review, and the future of the ENRF review.
- **12 July (Online)** – To discuss on the Due Diligence Report conducted by Aurion - a Brussels' law company, and to prepare the joint ENRF BoD/EFN Executive Committee meeting of 12 July 2023, aiming to brief the EFN Executive Committee the outcomes of the Due Diligence Report and next steps.



C. EFN Executive Committees & General Assemblies

As done since its establishment, the EFN Executive Committee and the EFN General Assembly were, in 2023, continuously informed on the ENRF developments, and on the ENRF Directors' reflections on ENRF work and future.



On the **joint ENRF BoD/EFN Executive Committee meeting held on 12 July 2023**, the ENRF Directors and the EFN Executive Committee members discussed the future and sustainability of the Foundation, including the Due Diligence Report conducted by Aurion, and recommendations from the ENRF BoD to the EFN EXCOM.

The **EFN April 2023 General Assembly** was informed on the ongoing developments, namely on the progress of the Due Diligence Report on the future of ENRF.

The **EFN October 2023 General Assembly** was informed on the outcomes of the Due Diligence Report and recommendations and were asked to discuss/decide on the future of the ENRF.

D. ENRF Brussels Office

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](#). It carried out the full ordinary management of the Foundation, based on the agreements

adopted by the Board of Directors, making the link between the Foundation and EFN, building alliances with the MEPS, research bodies & experts, and making sure that the ENRF contributed to the policy decision making process from a nursing research perspective, focusing on the policy area/priorities as established by the ENRF Board.

One of the key activities for the EFN Office was to make sure to bring the key EU policy developments information to the nursing researchers, and to the EFN members, through the [ENRF Website news](#), [ENRF Newsletters](#), and [Briefing Notes](#). 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.

The ENRF Office also made sure that all the administration obligations were 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.

III. ACTIVITIES

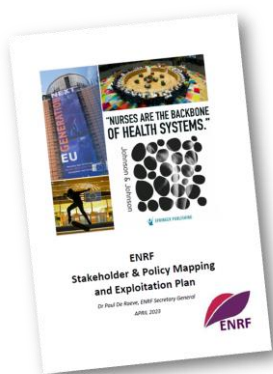
In 2023, the ENRF continued taking forward its activities, even though reduced, in compliance with the agreement of the October 2019 EFN General Assembly, in Greece, and in the context of rethinking the future of the Foundation. Which meant for the ENRF Office the circulation of only 2 Newsletters over 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 EU topics seen as key for nursing research ongoing developments, and drafting some key documents as agreed by the EFN Members in 2019.

A. Evidence Based Policy Briefs

Over the last 2 years (2021-2022), the ENRF developed 6 key Policy Briefs: [Care left Undone](#); [Digitalisation](#); [Nursing Mentorship](#); [Advanced Practice Nursing](#); [Nursing Planetary Health](#) and [Violence Against Nurses](#), with their own recommendations. These Policy Briefs are now being used to support the EFN lobby work towards the EU institutions and the ENRF developments. They are all available on [ENRF Website](#).



B. Stakeholder & Policy Mapping



In 2021, the ENRF Board of Directors discussed and approved the need to have a stakeholders' & policy mapping for one of the defined ENRF priorities, to help analyse, understand, and create effective strategies to promote [ENRF Strategic and Operational Research Plan 2021-2024 \(SORP\)](#) and [Policy Briefs](#), providing an analysis of the EU policy actors, networks and funding agendas in order to influence research policy and support EFN work. Digitalisation was seen by the ENRF BoD as a key topic to develop this stakeholders' & policy mapping, taking into account the ENRF [Policy Brief on Digitalisation](#) and as a follow-up of the [EFN event on digitalisation](#) in the European Parliament, in February 2020.

In 2022, the ENRF continued to develop this document, with major focus on the [European Health Parliament](#) - a movement connecting and empowering the next generation of European health leaders to rethink EU health policies - constituted by a group of 60 young professionals.

Stakeholder - European Health Parliament	Objectives	Interests	Influence	Potential
Every year, the European Health Parliament (EHP) selects 60 talented young healthcare professionals from all over the EU to help Europe by developing innovative and practical solutions to current and future health challenges.	The EHP wants to achieve two objectives: First, the EHP wants to prepare the next generation of health leaders in Europe by providing them with practical experience through their interaction with stakeholders, both at national and international level. Second, the EHP wants to prepare the next generation of health leaders in Europe by providing them with practical experience through their interaction with stakeholders, both at national and international level.	The EHP is European because it needs to be. The EHP is European because it needs to be. The EHP is European because it needs to be. The EHP is European because it needs to be. The EHP is European because it needs to be.	Key to influence the writing of the EU Health Strategy and the EU Health Policy . The EHP can also play a facilitating role in the EU Health Strategy and the EU Health Policy .	ENRF potential impact on EHP: Possible impact on EHP: Possible impact on EHP: Possible impact on EHP:

This led to some successes for the ENRF in influencing their outcomes on Digitalisation with ENRF views taken into account in their final [recommendations](#).

In January 2023, the EFN Directors agreed to draw out an exploitation plan linking the 6 ENRF Policy Briefs and the ENRF Stakeholder Mapping process, with targets and people to meet and have a dialogue with, in connection with the [EFN SOLP](#) & [ENRF SORP](#). The [ENRF Stakeholder & Policy Mapping](#) was thus updated to include this overview. This will help to identify the key priorities to focus on to influence the research policy process of the European Commission.

C. 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 2023, no major EU consultations were made available for the ENRF to provide input.

D. 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. Contributing to an efficient information flow, the ENRF participated in 2023 in some key EU meetings and looked at building 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.

E. Meetings

Invited to participate in some key meetings, the ENRF Board and ENRF Secretary General, took 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 attended in 2023:

- **Research Seminar on "Labour and skills shortages in the EU"**, on 17 January 2023. Organised by Social Situation Monitor on behalf of the European Commission, the [seminar](#) presented and discussed recent research on labour and skills shortages and skill forecasts in the EU. The EU is very active to guarantee active support to employees and a fair transition to climate neutrality – the EU Commission is focusing on 2 areas: Active support to quality

employment; and Reskilling people to be competitive in the labour market (skills intelligence). 2023 being the year of skills, this is the good opportunity to tackle the issue of working conditions and wages.

- **'One hour with Europe' event with Emanuela Bellan, European Commission DG Joint Research Centre**, on 27 March 2023. The [event](#) underlined the importance to boost science knowledge and innovation, and provided an overview on the Joint Research Centre ([JRC](#)) of the European Commission, its role, approach and future opportunities for Researchers, Universities and HEIs. The JRC works very closely with research and policy organisations in the EU Member States, with the European institutions and agencies, and with scientific partners in Europe and internationally, including within the United Nations system.
- **Delving into the Evaluation Summary Report in Horizon Europe**, on 16 May 2023. The meeting gave an overview on the process of expertise / evaluation of a Horizon EU proposal, and how to improve future applications to EU funds. Often overlooked by candidates frustrated by their project rejection, the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) contains a great deal of information. Important points to keep in mind for any project submission is the gender dimension and inclusion, to have a very compressive and detailed proposal, define the social and economic impacts of the proposal and innovation, and identified activities adapted to the scale of the project.
- **Talking Europe with Marc Lemaître, Director General of DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD)**, on 22 May 2023. The [event](#) focused on DG RTD work and future activities, including the Digital Education Action Plan, the New European Bauhaus, and the EU Green Deal. Horizon Europe was reconfirmed as the most impactful tool for improving research and innovation with the aim of creating ever more sustainable solutions to improve health and the environment around us. The [funding opportunities](#) Horizon Europe offers are important and can help improve nursing research.
- **Horizon Europe Info Day**, on 1st June 2023. The event focused on the [Cluster 1 on "Health" Work Programme for 2024](#), and informed the participants on the funding opportunities available, put in place by the European Commission to support and improve the healthcare sector. Created in 2021 with the aim to prevent and rapidly respond to health crisis and emergencies, HERA mostly relies on the [Cluster 1](#) because Horizon Europe represents the financial tool for HERA to promote research and innovation to develop effective, safe and affordable medical countermeasures for pandemic preparedness and response.
- **[State of the Union address 2023](#) from President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen**, on 13 September 2023. Young generation was placed at the centre of her speech, underlining the need to listen to them, to listen their ideas and their worries, in order to shape the Europe of opportunities and equality. She also raised that the European Commission will boost EU funds

to invest in innovation with Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the forefront of the developments.

- **Health European Summit: Innovation in health for a brighter future**, on 10 October 2023. The participants discussed innovation and digitalisation of health systems. Maya Matthews, from DG Santé, stressed that with the Covid-19 pandemic health became the top priority at EU and Global level. This had never happened before. For years, the instruments were there, but we did not know how to use those digital tools. Digital health literacy is key to underpin a good health system. Therefore, it is key to empower people on digitalisation as only by involving them in the process it will be possible to create trust on it.

IV. REFERENCE POINTS NETWORK

For the European Commission it is key to know ‘who’ is behind the Foundation and who it represents. Therefore, building an internal nursing research reference points network is key to show the European Commission that the ENRF is a 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](#).

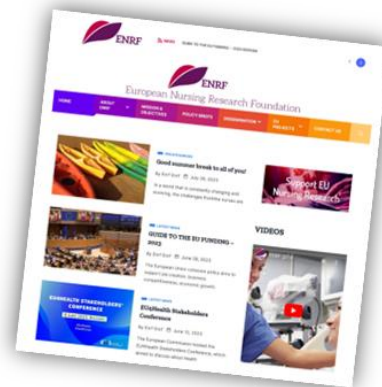
As such, in 2023, the ENRF Office kept, as much as possible, the list of Reference Points up-to-date and as in the previous years, the ENRF Office made sure to provide the reference points, and the EFN members, with as much information as possible on the ongoing EU developments on research that could be helpful for nursing research, through the ENRF Briefing Notes, Newsletters, etc.

V. COMMUNICATION

Communication is crucial to enhance effectiveness, and make ENRF activities visualised, to get the message across, and to engage ENRF reference points with the ENRF work. Communication is also key to make the Foundation more visible, especially at EU level. In 2023, the ENRF continued to communicate and share important information on nursing research at EU level, although reduced due to the reflexion of the future of the Foundation, as approved by the EFN members at the EFN October 2019 General Assembly. As such, 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](#). All the information shared is available on [ENRF Website](#).

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 key news, 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). Being a key tool, the ENRF 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 2023, the ENRF Office published 1 Newsletter: [May 2023](#). All ENRF Newsletters are available on [ENRF Website](#).



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 2023 few key Briefing Notes: [Horizon Europe – Cluster 1](#) (June 2023), [EU4Health Stakeholders Conference](#) (June 2023), [UK researchers to join again Horizon Europe in 2024](#) (September 2023). All the ENRF Briefing Notes are 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 for the moment these are not so much used as agreed by the EFN members at the October 2019 EFN General Assembly.

Revision of the ENRF Communication Material

In January 2022, the ENRF Board of Directors approved the review of the ENRF communication materials (Newsletter, Activity Report, Briefing Notes, etc.) by an external company, to show the impact of ENRF. This work was undertaken over 2022. At their meeting in January 2023, the ENRF Directors discussed and approved the reviewed material. This new revised material is now being used by the ENRF Office.

VI. FUTURE OF THE ENRF

While developing the Terms of Reference for the ENRF Review, and looking at the ENRF Budget, ENRF President, Anne Marie Rafferty, together with EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, and Pat Cullen (RCN), realised that they would need to step back before going further with a review. They agreed that an important first step to be done in this process was to undertake a due diligence review, before a review could be done.

A Belgium Lawyers Company, Aurion Law BV (www.aurionlaw.be), was consulted to analyse the situation and the options. The outcomes of the Due Diligence Report were discussed by the ENRF Board of Directors and the EFN EXCOM, meeting on 12 July 2023, coming to some conclusions/recommendations to discuss at the EFN EXCOM meeting on 7 September 2023.

At their face-to-face meeting in Brussels, the EFN EXCOM discussed and approved some options, recommendations and next steps to bring to the EFN October 2023 General Assembly, in Spain, where the EFN members were asked to discuss and decide on the future of the Foundation. Based on the overview on the different options provided by the EFN Vice-President (on behalf of the EFN EXCOM) and from a more legal perspective, by the EFN lawyer, the EFN Members voted unanimously for the dissolution of ENRF.

The EFN members believe that nursing research is key, but the ENRF's mission to use research to influence EU policymaking, is something the EFN is already doing in its daily lobby work. Therefore, there is no need to have two organisations doing the same.

VII. CONCLUSION

Throughout the years the EFN members have been strong supporters of nursing science and research, namely through the creation the ENRF, and through some key developments as the EU project ENS4Care, in which ENRF was a partner. The EFN members clearly recognise the essential role of evidence-based nursing care in health service delivery, believing that evidence is also critical to leverage influence in health policy development with politicians and other decision makers at EU and national level.

Nursing is the largest health profession and essential to sustainable health systems. Today, after difficult pandemic years, the challenges frontline nurses are facing, and the emerging needs, are huge. And if we consider that nurses are massively leaving the profession due to bad working conditions, low salaries, high workloads, or poor mental health support, this takes another dimension.

In this context, research and innovation play a key role in maintaining and promoting the health of European citizens while fostering the development of quality, efficient, and safe healthcare services delivery.

From a nursing research perspective, investing in research and innovation is investing in Europe's future.

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

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