



# European Nursing Student Association Newsletter

1<sup>st</sup> Edition

2021

## THE BOARD MEMBERS

### Catherine O'Connor: President

She is the Student and New Graduate Officer with the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO). She has been in this post representing student nurses and midwives in Ireland since January 2020. Before this, she worked as a registered general nurse in a large acute hospital in Dublin.



### Edel Marlèn Taraldsen: Vice President

She is a nurse from Norway and also the student president in the Norwegian Nurses Organisation (NNO).



### Lukas Hilleke: Board Member

He is a 27 year old nurse from Germany.

In 2017 he finished nursing school and started working on a interdisciplinary ICU in a small hospital in Dresden. Last year he started university to become an Advanced Practice Nurse.

Also, in 2017 Lukas joined the "DBfK Junge Pflege" and at the beginning of 2020 he joined the "DBfK Lenkungsgruppe Junge Pflege". They organize conferences for young nurses and nursing students in Germany and try to encourage more young nurses to get involved in politics in regional and national ways.



### Hilal Shide Gure: Board Member

She is a third year nursing student in Norway. She's active student politician. She is a board member of the Norwegian Nursing student association (NNO). With Edel and 7 other nursing student they represent over 14 000 nursing students in Norway.

Hilal is also a member of the student parliament of one of the biggest universities in Norway. Which represents over 20 000 students.



### Cátia Azenha: Board Member

She is from Portugal and she is a 4th year student with 21 years old. She is vice-president of the nursing student's association in her school since 2018, and she is also a member of ESEP General Council since 2019.

Last year, Cátia became a member of National Federation of Nursing Students Associations (FNAEE), a structure that represents almost 9000 nursing students in Portugal, and her ambition is every year achieve new challenges and add it to her journey.



# EUROPEAN NURSING STUDENT ASSOCIATION



## EUROPEAN NURSING STUDENT ASSOCIATION (ENSA)

The European Nursing Student Association is a global association that represents all nursing students in Europe.

Our aim is to expand our voice and fight for the rights of the students.

We must as nursing students come together, learn from each other and work hand in hand, so that nursing education in Europe will improve and the future generation of nurses speak with one voice.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Promoting the highest possible training standard for European nursing students, so that the highest possible standard for nursing and maintained for everyone regardless of age, race, skin colour, religious conviction, gender, orientation, political conviction, social status, and mental state.
- ❖ Promoting the interests of nursing students and encouraging high professional ideals among them.
- ❖ Promoting and encouraging international relations between nursing students.
- ❖ Providing advice, if requested, for the creation and development of national nursing student organisations.
- ❖ Promoting solidarity work at national and international level. In this respect ENSA will observe the ethical rules of the international council of nurses (ICN).

## The Newsletter

The new members of the ENSA board already set out to work and one of the goals they set was to create a newsletter.

This is the first edition of 3 planned publications this year, and in view of the whole pandemic situation we are experiencing, this publication is about the effects of COVID-19 on nursing education.

To do this we have outlined some of the experiences of students in each of the board members' countries below.

## The Effects of COVID-19

*The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Republic of Ireland was reported on the 29th of February 2020. Following this, cases spread and public health restrictions such as school, pub, and non-essential retail shop closures came into effect in March. Since March, the vast majority of Higher Educational Institute (HEIs such as colleges and universities) lectures have been delivered online to minimize the number of students on campuses. All supernumerary clinical placements were ceased from the 10th of April 2020, but internship placements were permitted to continue. This resulted in many student nurses and midwives needing to complete a substantial amount of clinical placement before the next academic year (beginning in September 2020) in order to be able to qualify on time. As a result of representation made by the INMO, an agreement was reached with the nursing regulator (the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland), the HEIs, and the health service which oversees the clinical placement sites.*

*This agreement meant that many student nurses could take up posts as paid healthcare assistants and receive recognition of up to 6 weeks' work towards their clinical placement hours (provided that their clinical placement was not due to be a specialty placement). This meant that the majority of students who had had placements cancelled due to COVID-19 had less/no time to make up during the summer. Since September, all supernumerary placements are taking place and the vast majority of lectures are being delivered remotely. Normally, supernumerary clinical placements are unpaid and so student nurses work as healthcare assistants part-time in order to fund themselves. While inadequate financial supports for students has been an issue for years, it has been exacerbated since placements have resumed as many private employers will not employ students while they are on placement due to cross-contamination concerns. The INMO has been engaging with the Department of Health to seek adequate financial supports for student nurses and midwives.*

*For the universities, hospitals and other health institutions which are involved in the education of nursing students, the pandemic has given a lot of challenges. I do believe that every one of them has done (and are still doing) their best to educate the students in expected time. I'm glad that the students get to continue their education even when the schools are closed most of the time. But we do see that this is not as good as meeting physically. We are concerned about the students' psychological health, and we as an organisation do feel a responsibility to watch over the students. Local representatives in the NNO are doing a great job in this work. They arrange social and knowledge-based events to all of the nursing students. These events are now digitalised, but the engagement is great, and we hope that the nursing students appreciate the local representatives!*

Edel Taraldsen (Norway)

Catherine O'Connor (Ireland)

COVID-19 is a challenge not only in Germany but all over Europe and the whole world. Each and every one of us must show solidarity, keep a distance from people in everyday life and reduce social contacts drastically. The following claims are an excerpt from a position paper of the "Lenkungsgruppe JungePfleger" the youth organization of the German Nursing Association (Deutscher Berufsverband für Pflegeberufe- DBfK).

The "Lenkungsgruppe Junge Pflege" posted nine claims for the continuation of nursing education in Germany. [...]

1. The quality of nursing education must be guaranteed during the pandemic.
2. Nursing schools and universities have to keep nursing students informed with the latest information.
3. Psychological support must be offered to nursing students and young nurses.
4. The clinical tasks have to be conformed to the qualifications of nursing students.
5. Without previous education on theoretical background nursing students should not work in clinical settings.
6. Practical guidance from nursing instructors must be guaranteed.
7. Exam preparations and exams must be adapted to the current situation.
8. The government must support nursing schools and universities unbureaucratically with realizing digital forms of education.
9. The probation period at the beginning of nursing education has to be adjusted to the current situation. [...] (Lenkungsgruppe Junge Pflege, 2020):

The future of nursing must not suffer from the pandemic, because well-educated nurses are more important than ever.

Lukas Hilleke (Germany)

In March 2020, the first cases of Covid-19 emerged in Portugal and even that month the first deaths were recorded, with the government acting relatively early to prevent the spread of the virus and hospital overload. After all the measures, we went through a more peaceful period, but in the last months, the epidemiological evolution has led the council of ministers to declare the state of emergency again. Despite these measures, cases have continued to increase, deaths have also increased and we are now adopting new measures to limit the spread of the virus, with a vaccination plan already in place for Covid-19 starting in 2021.

Nursing Education's curricular plan had been changed on March 2020, when we became to realize the complications of the Covid-19 pandemic. At this time the suspension of the clinical internships was declared and because of this, the students continued to have theoretical classes, but online instead of in person.

The changes felt for the 4th year students of the course were related to the decreasing of the number of contact hours that was needed to end the graduation. On the other hand, this change allowed all the students in the last year to end their clinical internships in the time schools have fixed previously defined, and with that graduate as nurses on last July. Despite this, some students from other clinical years were left with clinical internships to be done. On this case, the students were able to conclude the remaining internships later on the year.

A few months later, when the number of Covid-19 cases decreased, some students could start clinical internships and others, in different schools, could not and maintained the theoretical classes. To finish the school year on time, many students were overwhelmed with many hours of work in less time.

Right now, all students are in the year they should be, but with the later start of the 2020/2021 school year schools needed to restructure the curriculum, and currently students have the same number of contact hours, but less time. In fact, there was an increased effort by the students, teachers, schools, hospitals and local health care facilities to make this possible.

Cátia Azenha (Portugal)

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The ENSA Board hope that you have benefitted from reading our first newsletter. The WHO have extended the Year of the Nurse and Midwife into 2021 in Europe, demonstrating the value of the profession including that of nursing students. As the year progresses, we will keep you updated on the work we are undertaking. If your student nursing organisation is not yet associated with ENSA, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We would love to hear from you and help you to become involved in representing your country's nursing students at an international level. If you are interested in learning more, please email [president-ensa@outlook.com](mailto:president-ensa@outlook.com). Don't forget that you can keep up-to-date with ENSA via our social media channels:



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