

Madam President of the International Council of Nurses,
Mr President of the Cyprus Nurses' and Midwives Association,
Madam President of the European Federation of Nurses,
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Health Services of Cyprus,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

The Hellenic Nurses' Association was pleased and honoured to be invited in this event.

On behalf of the President and the Board Members I most heartily thank Mr Leontiou, President of the Cyprus Nurses' and Midwives Association with whom we have close and constructive co-operation.

I will refer, in brief, to the Greek nursing and most specifically to the Nursing Workforce.

The majority of the nursing personnel in Greece works for the State Health Sector and the 2005 records of the Ministry of Health showed that:

- The nursing personnel, including the assistant nurses, are 43.248 from which 83.3% are females and 16.7% males.
- The age of the majority of the nurses working in hospitals is over 36 years of age.
- The working nursing personnel, as a body, are graduates of the Nursing Departments of the Technological Educational Institutes and only 1.34% percent are graduates of the Nursing Department of the University.
- The average age of the nursing personnel is 40 years old.

The nursing workforce problems influence nurses in Greece in various ways and this can be seen in the implication they have in nursing practice. The problems are:

Nursing Shortage Problems

- Because of the economic crisis
- Because of nurses' aging and retirement
- Because of nurses withdrawal from the profession
- Because of the old average age of the working personnel
- Because of Nurses' burnout
- Because of the working conditions

Nursing Education Problems

- The two levels of nurses (university and technological education) create problems in everyday practice and thus their unification in one level education, the university one, is necessary.
- The improvement of quality in nursing education is demanded, so that it would provide not only sufficiency of knowledge and skills but also the formation of a positive attitude towards the profession.
- There is demanded the enactment of a frame of securing the quality of education by means of evaluation.

Nursing Policy Problems

- Nurses' little participation in decision making
- Political influences on Nursing Policy
- Problematic co-operation among the nursing groups and agencies
- Problematic interdisciplinary co-operation

The solution of these problems will result in:

- The security of better working conditions
- The security of better salaries
- The nurses' protection from occupational hazards
- The best central organisation of the nursing profession
- The foundation of the position of Chief Nurse officer in the Ministry of Health
- The Nursing Career Development
- The Nurses Professional Development

As causes of the above situation there must be considered the ineffective development of the human and most especially the nursing workforce in the domain of health.

This ineffective development, as it appears in the research outcomes of 10 years ago and which in the least have changed nowadays, results in the fact that 1/2 of the head nurses have over 20 years of employment, while only a small minority takes the office of Director or Supervisor having employment of under 16 years. Regarding the qualifications of the head nurses the 98% per cent is of the technological nursing education, the 1% of University nursing education and 1% of secondary nursing education.

The 80% of the nursing personnel is employed in hospitals of National Health System, the 10% in private hospitals and the rest in the Primary Health Sector. Before or after graduation about 50% of nurses leave nursing, because of the low salaries and the unfavourable working conditions. The ratio nurse/bed is about the half in comparison with the average of the OECD countries.

We believe that the future for nursing will be more optimistic and important role in this there will play the institutional nursing groups or agencies in European and International level.

The Greek nursing groups and agencies must also co-operate effectively towards this goal.

Thank you for your attendance.