

My dear colleagues

I am honoured to have the opportunity to greet you and to wish you a successful conference. I wish I could be with you in person but then again I will have the next best choice ..having Evanthia read my letter to you.

I find the theme of the conference to be the key of what we as critical care nurses stand for – “Holistic Approach in Emergency and Critical Care. Visions-Steps-Actions.. I have been a critical care nurse for many years and from the very start this has always been my guiding light, caring for the patient in a holistic approach which means we care for both patients and their families. I have always looked at this as the ART and SCIENCE of our profession.

Being a critical care nurse is perhaps one of the most challenging profession in nursing. Our patients are the most sick ones in the hospital, living in a complex technical environment and often there is a fine line between life and death. We, the nurses are the ones who are there at their bedside 24 hours to observe and report and our patient’s outcome also depends on how competent we are and how well we understand and recognize the changes. Still, both Finland and Croatia are facing problems with their national intensive care training programmes where the authorities plan to cut them down. It is a great concern of EfCCNa that this might happen in other European countries as well and therefore it should be brought to the attention of all critical care nurses. EfCCNa has already supported the Finnish association with a letter which will be sent to the the Ministry of Education and we will also support the Croatian national CC Nursing Society with an open letter to the Ministry of Health as well.

This not something we can watch happening without reacting to and we certainly look at this as a very serious and negative development. It feels like we are going backwards instead of forward when the reality we live in is that we are dealing with more and more complex patients and environment of critical care.

At our last EfCCNa meeting in Zagreb – on September 24 and 25, when national representatives had given their reports of pressing issues in their countries the main hot topics that were left are Education, Workforce / staffing issues and Safety and Practise Development. These are all domains who are being worked on by EfCCNa’s different subcommittees. One of EfCCNa’s objectives is To improve the recognition of critical care nursing by all European health care institutions by serving as the authoritative voice of critical care nurses across the European community / Europe – we hope to be able to and are working hard through our committees and other work to reach that aim.

I am sure most of us have one thing in common – when we decided to become nurses, we were driven by passion –.the passion of caring. But to be able to perform at a highest level we need education, experience and to develop critical thinking that will enable us to deal with the environment we work in and to care for our patients and their families when they are at their most vulnerable times in their lives. I have always looked upon it as an honour that my patients have trusted me with their lives and I have also always considered my self so fortunate being able to aligne my passion and the purpose of the work I do.

But we also live in a stressful world as nurses and we need inspiration and new knowledge to strenghten our selves, our confidence and our positions. We all need the opportunity to see beyond our units and have visions for the future that give us courage to deal with our every day lives.

Therefore participating in a conference like the one you are doing this weekend – meeting friends and colleagues and having the opportunity to put behind you that stressful unit and come together with each other to learn and to discuss and network – and come back home full of new ideas and energy. There is nothing better than being apart of a work environment where we acknowledge each other and also acknowledge that things can be tough, but together we strive for building that healthy world with healthy relationships and where collaboration is the key word. Nurses, doctors and other staff working together respecting each other and each other's autonomy with one main goal to get our patients and their families through the worse times of their lives without complications to their body and soul.

Your association has been a member of EfCCNa since 2004 – we have had the pleasure to enjoy your beautiful country and hospitality when we had our council meeting in Nicosia in April 2007. I will never forget that – we had a fantastic time.

I want you to know that EfCCNa consists of devoted national representatives who care about you and what happens to our colleagues around Europe..

On behalf of EfCCNa - I wish you all a wonderful conference – may you go home feeling so good about your self and what you have learned, going back to your unit full of confidence and energy. Don't ever let the passion go out of what you do, that being your work or your privat life. Always be proud of who you are and what you do as critical care nurses...we are working small and big miracoulus every day!!

My warmest wishes from cool Iceland to hot Cyprus !!
your EfCCNa president – Rósa