

EN

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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission, in January 2025, launched the first EU action to address nurse shortages, with a EUR 1.3 million budget under the EU4Health Programme¹.

The Commission's Expert Group on Health Systems Performance Assessment collects practices on defined staffing levels. Moreover, Member States benefit from the Joint Action HEROES² on health workforce planning and forecasting to better estimate staffing needs and aligning health workforce strategies with the changing needs for healthcare.

If a natural or human-induced disaster occurs (e.g. disease outbreak, wildfire, flood, or earthquake), the Union Civil Protection Mechanism³ (UCPM) can be activated. Any country in the world, as well as the United Nations, can activate the Mechanism. In such case, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre⁴ (ERCC) can coordinate the deployment of medical teams. Member States and Participating States provide teams to the UCPM at various levels of response, including offers from individual countries, the European Civil Protection Pool⁵, and rescEU⁶. Qualified nurses, along with other healthcare professionals, may be part of the teams that are deployed in emergency operations.

National nursing registers may exist but fall under national competence and hence conditions for access to information vary.

In addition, based on Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health⁷, the Commission is organising trainings - e.g. with the help of a contractor - for healthcare and public health staff to strengthen health crisis preparedness and surveillance capacities.

¹ https://health.ec.europa.eu/latest-updates/launch-first-eu-action-address-nurse-shortages-shows-positive-impact-european-health-union-2025-01-17_en.

² <https://healthworkforce.eu/>.

³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en.

⁴ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre-ercc_en.

⁵ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/european-civil-protection-pool_en.

⁶ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/resceu_en.

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=celex:32022R2371>.