

Call to action on specialist nursing in heart failure

'Nurses have played a huge role in my heart failure care. They are empathetic and person-oriented; this is vital to everyday self-management, staying safe and living my life.'

**Steven Macari, person living with heart failure
and CEO, Association Vie Et Coeur**

Heart failure specialist nurses are a crucial investment if we are to ensure sustainable health systems and meet growing demand for care. These specialists are vital in coordinating care,¹ optimising treatment,^{2,3} leading telemedicine programmes⁴ and providing patient education.⁵

Specialist nurse-led care in heart failure could reduce hospital readmissions by up to 33%⁶ and reduce mortality by 10%,⁷ while improving mental health and quality of life,^{6,8} and delivering cost-savings.⁶

Yet most EU Member States do not have sufficient capacity in heart failure specialist nurses and face major barriers to future expansion, such as a lack of competency frameworks, formal accreditation or consistent funding. This is deeply concerning as heart failure is the leading cause of avoidable admissions across Europe, and its prevalence may rise by as much as 90% between 2019 and 2040.^{9,10}

'Specialist nurses are fundamental to sustainable, high-quality heart failure care, yet all countries face marked barriers in expanding this workforce. It is vital the EU champions their growth.'

**Giuseppe Rosano, President, Heart Failure Association of the
European Society of Cardiology (ESC HFA)**

We call on the EU to prioritise investment in heart failure nursing across Member States, in line with the World Health Organization's 'Nursing Now' campaign and its Global Strategic Directions to strengthen nurse leadership. Under initiatives such as the Joint Action on cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, Healthier Together and EU4Health, the EU must now invest in:

- **conducting comprehensive research on the state of the EU's cardiovascular nursing workforce,** investigating capacity, competences, training and accreditation, as well as system barriers and mechanisms of funding
- **creating a European working group on cardiovascular nursing (2024–2029)** to guide the EU's future investments and promote best-practice exchange between Member States, and identify key opportunities for nursing to maximise person-centred care and therapeutic education in a changing healthcare environment (for example, via the use of point-of-care devices, digital solutions and other innovative tools)
- **establishing a template training and certification scheme for heart failure specialist nurses,** drawing on the expertise and best practice from existing Member State initiatives, such as those in Germany, Ireland and Spain.

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This call to action is part of the European Heart Failure Mission, an initiative by the Heart Failure Policy Network. If you would like to get involved in the Mission, please get in touch with us at:

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