



FEDERATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NURSES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

5th FOHNEU INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Tarragona Spain

19 September 2012

OPENING CEREMONY

Good morning Mr. Mayor, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends.

Thank you for joining us at the 5th FOHNEU Congress. We are delighted to welcome participants from 21 countries.

The FOHNEU Congresses are the thermometer to measure the temperature of the activities of the Federation.

Through our successful twinning project Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and the Czech Republic have now become members.
Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia together with Turkey have joined the Federation as Observers

The FOHNEU Congress provides a window of opportunity for Occupational Health Nurses to present their work.

It is the Platform on which to deliver the Research and Evidence Based Practice from our special branch of nursing to the EU Stakeholders.

It is the arena where we can document our progress and the status of the 5 FOHNEU Aims:

- **To contribute to the total health, safety and well being of the European working population.**
- **To raise the profile of Occupational Health Nursing within the European Union.**
- **To promote training, education and standards of professional qualifications.**
- **To encourage research into areas of occupational health practice, education and management with publication of the results.**

- **To maintain an open dialogue with the EU organisations responsible for health and safety, public health and EU nursing authorities.**

-To contribute to the total health, safety, and well being of the European working population.

A Survey carried out by FOHNEU in 2009 confirmed that our members are developing and delivering a multitude of services to the European Workforce. In a recent benchmark survey, FOHNEU members confirmed that they are actively involved at all levels in assessing and monitoring the health status of the workforce and promoting change to improve working conditions.

-To raise the profile of Occupational Health Nursing within the European Union

Occupational Health Nurses are often at the front line and in daily contact with the workforce, and have a key position to contribute to the identification and elimination of risks, and the implementation of health promotion strategies.

We already play a major role in bridging the gap from theory to practice and establishing the 'help to self-help' principles through the concept of empowerment, and in the reduction of long-term sickness absence through return to work rehabilitation programs

These activities contribute to human and economic benefits at individual, company, Organisation, National and EU levels.

FOHNEU has organised EU working groups to address relevant EU green papers and to communicate with MEP's involved in Occupation Health and Safety issues.

For us to focus on promoting health at work is sound economic policy.

An effective teamwork demands that each discipline must contribute with his/her area of knowledge to produce the synergetic effect that will be to the advantage of the workforce. Equality and respect between the members of the team is essential and leadership of a health team should not be allocated to any specific discipline but to the best qualified candidate.

-To promote training, education, and standards of professional qualifications.

The EU Directives do not advocate the education and qualifications required to deliver Occupational Health and Safety. This is addressed at national level and will therefore be diverse.

Despite that education is essential and the root to progress, we are aware that in some countries our Members continue to have little or no possibility to access

specialisation or further education programs. The reasons for this are varied and funding is always a central issue, but sadly we are also informed that often the Occupational Health Nurses are not a prioritized group. This unfortunate situation has been evident long before the financial crisis, reminding us that we have still a long way to go.

To evaluate the status and progress of OHN education within the Member States FOHNEU has recently completed a 3rd survey that will be presented during this congress.

-To encourage research into areas of occupational health practice, education, and management with publication of the results.

It is a great pleasure to inform you that we have received a record-breaking number of abstracts submitted by Occupational Health Nurses At the Helsinki Congress in 2003 there were 30 submissions, in 2007 in London we had increased to 53 .For the Tarragona Congress we have received a total of 75.This is an encouraging development for all of us.

-To maintain an open dialogue with the EU organisations responsible for health and safety, public health and EU nursing authorities

We have maintained our contact to the Commission for Occupational Health Safety and Inclusion, and I am sure Dr. Alvarez will confirm that FOHNEU is not an unknown entity within the department.

We have continued our formal Partnership with the EU-OSHA. and the President of the EU Parliament Mr. Martin Schulz is the Patron of this Congress.

Representatives of the main Stakeholders are represented on the program

I would like to offer sincere thanks to all those who have offered financial support to the Congress. Some as sponsors others offering scholarships to their own members, some helping colleagues in Member States where funding is impossible.

We also thank the FOHNEU representative for Germany Hans Schwertner who has kindly funded the teas and coffees for the next three days.

We have a state of the art program and I thank the Organising and Scientific Committees -the President and Members of FEDEET and the FOHNEU Board Members who have worked continuously in difficult times for the success of this event

Finally I offer special thanks to my colleague Eileen Sykes, and not least to Gurutze Aquire my co pilot on this, at times quite turbulent flight, caused by conditions completely outside our control.

To work at European level, based on framework directives,- National implementation with no unified methods, 27 Member States, with 27 languages traditions and cultures is a challenge in itself -

- **And no single country has all the answers.**

It is a long haul to build a solid foundation and secure steady development, - embracing the future and influencing change

Our diversity is our challenge but also provides our strength and the strong ties binding us together - our 200 year history in the field – our tradition of working across borders – our commitment -----and our mutual mission:

To consolidate and represent the voice of Occupational Health Nursing within the EU in order to promote the Health, Safety and Well-Being of the European Workforce.

We hope you will enjoy being with us as much as we enjoy having you.

A very warm welcome to all

THANK YOU

Julie Staun