The nursing profession has a wide scope of practice and a significant number of nursing specialties have been developed, are well established and are continuing to evolve. The contribution of specialist nursing is well recognised in many of the European health care systems and evidence of improved quality of care is published in several peer reviewed journals. Generally, European regulation / directives are focussed on “general care nursing” (Dir 2005/36) and therefore specialist nursing expertise and advanced practice including the post-registration education are not recognised in the context of EU issues.

In some area nurse specialists are bridging gaps in neglected areas of healthcare or provide high quality of care in tasks shifting between nursing and medical domains. The impact of chronic diseases, e.g. diabetes, cardio-vascular disease on the European population and health care systems threatens to overwhelm such systems. There is a distinct need to recognise the paradigm shift from acute disease management to chronic disease management in this context. This is recognised by major NGOs, e.g. WHO, IDF etc.

Specialist nurses by their advanced professional training, experience and education and in their specific roles as clinicians, researchers, educators and policy influencers have much to offer in the context of chronic disease management and new technologies.

Specialist Nurse:

A Specialist nurse is either a

- A nurse with a specific education for a restricted area of practice
- A nurse with basic nursing education working in a specific area of practice
- A nurse with a post-basic training, working in a specific area of practice
- A nurse with a formal post-basic education having an advanced practice in a specific area of practice

The education for a specialist nurse can vary depending on specificities. Some have a direct education for the specific practice without any training as general care nurse. It is for exemple the case for some psychiatric nurses and pediatric nurses. It is more often a further training or education after the basic nursing education for general care practice or an additional education beyond the level of the basic nursing education.

In 2000 the PCN and the European Network for Nurses Organisations agreed for the following definition and recommandations:

“A specialist nurse is a nurse formally educated and practically trained beyond the level of generalist nurse and authorised to practice as a specialist nurse with advanced expertise in a branch of nursing.

Specialised practice includes advance nursing and/or clinical skills, and related tasks, and advisory, research, teaching and administrative activities in the field of the specialty
Specialist nursing education is a formally recognised post-basic program of study which follows on from general nursing education and training and provides the knowledge and experience needed to ensure competence in the specialisation concerned. Further education, training, and authorisation are determined in the light of the tasks, training, education, and activities of post-basic specialists in other branches of the profession and in the light of the rules and regulations applicable to them. Titles for specialist nurses mostly include the designation specialist nurse combined with the name of the specialisation."

Recommendations and Principles

The specialty defines itself as nursing and subscribes to the overall purpose, functions, and ethical standards of nursing;
The specialty practice is sufficiently complex and advanced that is beyond the scope of general nursing practice.
There is both a demand and a need for the specialty service.
The focus of the specialty is a defined population that demonstrates recurrent problems and phenomena that lie within the discipline and practice of nursing 
The specialty practice is based on a core body of nursing knowledge that is being continually expanded, updated and refined by research and experience.
The specialty has established educational and practice standards that are congruent with those of the profession and are set by a recognised nursing body/ies.
The specialty adheres to the licensure/registration requirements for the general nurse.
Specialty expertise is obtained through a professionally approved advanced education program that leads to a recognised qualification. The program is administered by or in collaboration with a specialist nurse.
The specialty has a Credentialing process determined by the profession or in accordance with the national practice for other professions. Sufficient human and financial resources are available to support this process.
Specialist nurses are organised and represented within a specialty association or a branch of the national nurses' association and/or nursing authoritative body in order to develop and control the specialty education and practice.

The collective representation of Advanced & Specialist Nurses within Europe

The development of specialist and advanced nursing practice within Europe has emerged against a background of diverse socio-political drivers across Europe. European diversity presents significant challenges when strategies are developed aimed at developing a unified policy for specialist and advanced practice, research and education. In an attempt to represent the collective voice of specialist & advanced nurses within Europe the emergence of a new association – European Specialist Nursing Associations (ESNO) was formally established in 2002. ESNO has a major remit in acting as the professional voice for specialist & advanced nurses across Europe and works in partnership with other external key stakeholder and agencies both at local, national and European level. ESNO consists of associations from both European specialist and nursing interest groups and currently represents approximately 50,000 Advanced and specialist nurses across Europe.

Since the formal development of ESNO in 2002 an increasing number of European Specialist associations have formally joined ESNO and this continues to grow. ESNO fulfils an important consultative role with policy makers involved in matters influencing Advanced &
specialist nursing practice across Europe. This presentation outlines the unique challenges of representing the voice of advanced and specialist nurses across Europe, addresses the common areas seen as essential for the continued growth of Advanced & Specialist practice across Europe. Additionally a number of important projects which have had a significant impact upon Advanced Nursing practice within Europe from member associations of ESNO will be discussed which highlights the significant impact and professional voice of advanced nursing practice within Europe.

The ESNO members are:

- **ACENDIO** - Association for Common European Nursing Diagnoses, Interventions and Outcomes
- **EANN** - European Association for Neurosciences Nurses
- **EDTNA/ERCA** - European Dialysis and Transplant Nurses Association / European Renal Care Association
- **ECCNa** - European federation of Critical Care Nursing associations
- **ENDA** - European Nurse Directors Association
- **EONS** - European Oncology Nursing Society
- **EORNA** - European Operating Room Nurses Association
- **FEND** - Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes
- **FINE** - European Federation of Nurse Educators
- **FOHNEU** - Federation of Occupational Health Nurses within the European Union
- **Horatio** - European Psychiatric Nurses
- **IFNA** - International Federation of Nurse Anesthetists

**Mission Statement**
- To promote and contribute to the health and wellbeing of people in Europe:
  - ESNO will facilitate and enable the political voice of nurses, through collaboration with key stakeholders to strengthen the professional status and evidence based practice of nursing speciality.
  - Secure the recognition of specialism in nursing in the EU and the greater Europe

**Objectives**
- Network for communication and collaboration between European Specialist Nurses organisation and specialist interest groups in Europe
- Promote the recognition of and the professional status of the specialist nurse at the European level
- Represent the interests of the member organisations
- Provide expert advice on issues shaping specialism in nursing
- Promote the development of specialist nursing education, practice and research

**Strategic Plan**
- Work towards recognition of specialist education in the EU
- Mandatory post basic education for specialist nurses
- Focus on developing infrastructures for continuing professional development
- Collaborate with EFN on a position paper on lifelong learning for nurses
- Influencing EU social and health policy
- Provide specialist expert opinion in EU social, health, nursing education and research policy
• Respond actively to EU White and Green papers
• Respond to EU Recommendations and Directives
• Promote effective strategies in recruitment and retention of nurses
• Contribute to the discussion on the impact of the nurses moving from one country to another on the specialist nursing practice
• Collaborate with key stakeholders on relevant position papers
• Improve collaboration between interest groups
• Develop collaboration with key stakeholders within Europe
• Disseminate information on relevant actions to the members of ESNO (website and internal communication structures)
• Invite experts to speak on political leadership issues at specialist meetings
• Evaluate the collaboration with EFN and other stakeholder