The European Beating Cancer Plan states: High-quality cancer care depends on a high-quality workforce.

A number of studies clearly show that the EU is suffering from a shortage of nursing staff. We see up to 40% of nurses leave in the first years of the job. Now, during the Covid-19 pandemic, up to 66% of nurses say the pandemic has made them consider leaving the nursing profession. These are very worrying numbers!

**Act now.** This isn’t about some far away future of the healthcare workforce – change is already happening, and it is accelerating.

Healthcare professionals are leaving the profession, and replacing them won’t be easy – and this will create disruptions in cancer care delivery and will negatively affect safety and overall outcomes for patients with cancers.

**Give cancer nurses an equal opportunity to evolve their skills across Europe.**

A big part of preparing the cancer nursing workforce of the future is educating and training cancer nurses across the European continent.

This investment makes good sense: Providing cancer nurses with equal access to educational, training and career opportunities, and the associated continued training to evolve in their jobs can give healthcare across Europe a recruiting, retention and performance boost, which will help ensure workforce sustainability in the long term.

**Let go of yesterday’s approaches to learning**

Developing an EU cancer nursing workforce, so that cancer nurses can stay relevant in the workforce of the future, will require a rethink about how we educate and train them. We need to take the opportunity to implement and strengthen inter-professional education and training. We work together, so why not train together?

**Watch for work-related stress in healthcare. Look at the people behind the jobs.**

We can’t protect all jobs which are made redundant by change and innovation in cancer care – but policymakers do have a responsibility to their healthcare workforce. We can protect healthcare professionals by nurturing recognition, access to lifelong learning opportunities, supporting movability of the cancer care workforce across Europe and providing re-skilling opportunities.

We also need to support the young cancer care workforce so that they are stimulated, and develop passion to strengthen the future high-quality cancer care workforce.

This way, we can create a high quality healthcare workforce, by all working together.

EONS President Johan de Munter, 17 November 2021, European Cancer Summit.