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## Advanced Practice Nurse – A Challenge and Opportunity for Healthcare system

Jana Gelatiková<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comenius University in Bratislava, Jesenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin, Slovakia

\* jana.gelatikova@sksapa.sk

### Editorial

*Health systems in Europe, including the Slovak and Czech Republics, are currently facing serious challenges, such as an ageing population, a shortage of healthcare professionals, especially nurses and doctors, growing and changing health needs of patients, and pressure on the quality and efficiency of healthcare provided. These facts require nursing to take a leading position in advanced practical tasks, leadership in advanced practice tasks to promote the safe and efficient delivery of health services.*

*It is clear that the role of nurses is rapidly evolving and needs to be guided within a framework that would develop a new range of advanced practice based on evidence and insights gained from similar contexts. Advanced nursing roles will positively contribute to the ambitions of the European Pillar of Social Rights. In this context, representatives of the EFN are also considering, where various negotiations and preparations are underway to involve nurses with advanced practice in the health care system.*

*Who are Advanced Practice Nurses? Based on the characteristics of ICN or EFN, they are nurses "at the patient's bedside", who have at least completed the second degree of university studies, specialization in the given field and a variously defined number of years of nursing practice in the field. They are authorized to provide an advanced degree of nursing and health care, with the specific characteristics of their activities depending on the context or country in which they provide the type of nursing care. In countries such as Ireland, Great Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, advanced practice nurses are an integral part of the healthcare delivery team. Research confirms that their work leads to increased patient satisfaction, shorter waiting times and overall "streamlining" of the healthcare provided.*

*In Slovakia, the concept of a nurse with advanced practice is still evolving and its implementation is only at the beginning. Despite the fact that the amendment to the relevant legislative documents defines this position of a nurse, its competencies have expanded, legislative and organizational barriers, as well as the attitude of the professional public or nurses themselves, prevent its wider application in practice. There is a lack of a clear definition of the status of an advanced practice nurse, standardized educational programs and a sustainable career model of an advanced practice nurse with a comparison abroad.*

*The European Federation of Nurses, the European Commission, and the WHO support the integration of the advanced nurse as a key tool for increasing the availability of health care, especially in the primary and community areas. Research shows that the care provided by APNs is comparable to medical, often proving to be more affordable and at the same time more economically efficient. The European direction and recommendations should be a challenge for all EU countries. The EFN Working Group on Advanced Practice in Nursing – Advanced Practice Development has been established, in which countries such as Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom participate. In any case, if EU countries want to keep up with modern trends in healthcare, they should:*

- clearly define the competencies and responsibilities of nurses with advanced practice by adopting relevant legislation,*
- invest in education and develop accredited master's and bridging programs for advanced nursing practice;*
- to introduce pilot programs that will show the contribution of a nurse with advanced practice in Slovak healthcare,*
- to promote interdisciplinary cooperation, where nurses with advanced practice will be full members of healthcare teams.*

*Advanced practice nurses represent the future of affordable and cost-effective, sustainable healthcare. The Slovak Republic must decide how and whether to use nurses with the appropriate education that it currently has in the health system. He must also find a way to convince the professional and lay public that nurses with advanced practice are an integral part of the medical team in the provision of health care. They represent a huge potential that can significantly contribute to improving the health of the population and relieving an overburdened system. In his speech, EFN President Aristides Chorattas thanked all EFN members for their commitment and numerous contributions to key topics in order to advance the EU policy agenda to promote the nursing profession, including the topic of advanced practice. It is time to take advantage of the opportunity and possibilities that we have and start acting.*

*Author is a member of the Council of the Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives, Coordinator of the Regional Centre of the Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives for the Žilina Region, Delegate of the Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives at the General Assemblies of the European Federation of Nurses Associations.*

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