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DEVELOPMENT

Get involved with your nurse organisations

Benn Mott looks back on his year as president of the European Nursing Students Association

My one-year term as president of the European Nursing Students Association (ENSA), which

represents nursing organisations from across the continent, recently came to an end.

The experience has made me a more driven, organised and informed nurse, and I would encourage all students to get involved in such organisations.

ENSA was formed in 1978 in a divided and fragile Europe

STUDENT LIFE

Scotland in July, one of the main topics for discussion was the Bologna Declaration, an agreement reached

by education ministers from 29 European countries at a meeting in Italy in 1999.

The aim of the declaration was to promote compatibility between higher education institutions across national borders.

'WE LOOKED AT LEADERSHIP AND HOW STUDENTS CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON PATIENT POWER'

squeezed between the old Soviet bloc and the fledgling European Economic Community.

Now we have a larger and stronger European Union (EU) and a growing sense of European identity, yet the priorities of today's ENSA are surprisingly similar to those of the original group.

The organisation's founding objectives were to address the consequences of the developing partnerships between European states and to share ideas about how nurse education could be standardised across Europe.

At this year's annual meeting, hosted in Edinburgh by RCN

The declaration established the principle that – language proficiency permitting – nurses from any EU country should be allowed to work in any other member state.

In an address to the meeting, Paul de Raevé, general secretary of the European Federation of Nurses Associations, pointed out that several national governments have failed to

implement legislation that would make it possible for nurses from other EU states to work in their countries.

He said the European Commission is taking legal action against these governments to force them to comply with the relevant European directive.

During the four-day meeting we also looked at leadership and how students can have a positive impact on patient power.

Relatives of patients who have been failed by health services explained how nurses can help patients control their own healthcare journeys.

David Benton, who since the meeting has become chief executive of the International Council of Nurses, outlined the skills needed to be an organisational leader.

He urged students who are aspiring leaders to develop their ability to network and gather information, and stressed the importance of continual professional development.

RCN education adviser Dame Betty Kershaw said playing an active role in ENSA would help students climb the leadership ladder **NS**

Benn Mott, pictured, is past chair of the RCN Association of Nursing Students

RESOURCES

- European Nursing Students Association
<http://tinyurl.com/53kazy>
- Bologna Declaration
www.europecouncil.org/content/view/full/58765



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