



EFN Brussels Office
Clos du Parnasse 11a
B-1050 Brussels

Tel. +32 2 512 74 19
Fax +32 2 512 35 50

E-mail efn@efn.be
Web www.efnweb.org

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To whom it may concern
To the Government of the Republic of Slovenia

Brussels, 01 October 2019

Concern: Interference of the coordination of Slovenian Medical Associations into the competencies of nursing as an EU regulated profession

Dear Prime Minister Marjan Šarec
Dear Ministry of Health Aleš Šabeder
Dear National Assembly President Dr. Franc Trček
Dear Slovenia National Nurses and Midwives Association President Monika Ažman,

In all categories of health care, human resources policy in the field of health care has been underestimated and neglected in the long term. Nurses are no exception to that. Ensuring appropriate education and qualifications of general care nurses and allowing opportunities to advance the nursing profession are key to guaranteeing the sustainability of the health and social care ecosystems and ensuring the willingness of young people to choose nursing as a career path.

It is therefore crucial that national governments of the European Union make sure that their health systems have the necessary nursing workforce, with the necessary competences, to provide high-quality and safe healthcare services. The future health system builds in multi-disciplinarity and digitalisation to empower patients and citizens, and the 8 competencies in the EU law ([Directive 2005/36/EC](#) amended by [Directive 2013/55/EU](#)) provides the foundation for that future.

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) has been informed by our member association, the Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, that the coordination of Slovenian Medical Associations is now interfering with the integrity of the nursing profession in Slovenia, regulated by the EU Directive 36/55, going against the nursing expert group document defining competencies and professional activities of nurses and other nursing care providers in Slovenia, to which the Ministry of Health gave it consent to on 16th May 2019.

We are very surprised about the medical profession actions against the development of the nursing profession, knowing the legal EU basis as set out in Directive 2013/55/EU, and particular Article 31, is based on the support of the 5 sectoral professions, including the medical profession (the doctors). This EU should have been implemented in all EU Member States by 18 January 2016, so also Slovenia.

We would like to remind 'the opposition' that the competences listed under Article 31 of the Directive includes clearly "the independence of the nurse responsible for general care" in 3 out of 8 competencies described: Competence to independently diagnose the nursing care required (...) / Competence to independently initiate immediate measures to pre-serve life (...) / Competence to independently advise, instruct and support individuals needing care (...).

Furthermore, we remind the politicians in Slovenia that scientific evidence shows that increasing the level of nursing education leads to better patient outcomes! *"We find a nursing skill mix in hospitals with a higher proportion of professional nurses is associated with significantly lower mortality, higher patient ratings of their care and fewer adverse care outcomes. Each 10% reduction in the proportion of professional nurses is associated with a 12% increase in the odds of patient deaths"* Linda Aiken (2017)

Furthermore, at EU level the EFN has always worked very closely with the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), representing national medical associations across Europe, in getting this Directive voted in the European Parliament both in 2005 and 2013. So, it is very surprising for us to see that the Slovenian Medical Associations is now suddenly positioning itself against nursing as a profession.

The EFN fully supports its member association. We need motivated nurses who safeguard citizens through the healthcare system, and who are present at the patients' bedside and close to the citizens 24 hours/day, 7 days/week need an excellent education!

Therefore, the EFN urges all politicians and policymakers in Slovenia to proactively comply with the EU law, strengthen nursing as a profession, and as such develop citizens centred ecosystems. Nurses, often women, are the cornerstone of your health and social care ecosystem and there is no need to downgrade the nurses and the nursing profession, because the doctors want it.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Elizabeth Adams
EFN President



Dr Paul De Raeye
EFN Secretary General

For your information: The European Federation of Nurses' Associations (EFN) represents over 36 National Nurses' Associations and its work impacts on the daily work of 6 million nurses throughout the European Union and Europe. The EFN is the independent voice of the nursing profession and its mission is to strengthen the status and practice of the profession of nursing for the benefit of the health of the citizens and the interests of nurses in the EU & Europe.

