



European Nursing Council

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Brussels, the 6th of April 2020

Dear President of the European Parliament,
Dear President of the Council of the European Union,
Dear President of the European Commission,

I am writing to you in my capacity as President of the European Nursing Council (ENC), the organization bringing together the Regulatory Bodies of Nursing from several EU Member States and candidate countries.

As you very well know, these past weeks the European Union is facing a unique and very severe crisis caused by the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus across borders. Our profession is one of the most involved in the battle against the virus. Practically all the nurses in the EU and many amongst those who have gone out of active service in the past, are mobilized and are standing next to their patients, the European citizens, putting their health and safety over their own lives, in accordance with the high ethical standards that are governing our profession.

It strengthens us to see that in many countries, the citizens are taking initiatives to express their appreciation for the professionalism, humanity and dedication with which nurses and of course all our other colleagues from the healthcare sector, are dealing with the pandemic. Most recently, however, in many EU Member States, the more and more nurses and other professionals of healthcare are sharing with us a profound concern.

The means to efficiently face this crisis at the level of hospitals are running out. The Covid-19 pandemic is currently taking a toll on the citizens and the healthcare systems of the European Union. But, above all, it is having a huge negative impact on frontline nurses. They are doing their job in worse conditions than ever before, often lacking proper protective equipment, and often getting infected by the virus themselves, with deadly consequences for others in some cases. In that context we are in fact grateful for the joint procurement of personal protective equipment launched by the European Commission to address the crisis.

The problems of European health systems are not recent and have an impact on the attractiveness of our profession which already requires a lot of sacrifices. If we want in the future to have enough healthcare professionals, enough nurses to face a challenge like the one that is in front of us today, we need to take initiatives, including at the European Union level, in order to better focus on the nursing education, training and continuous professional development, to strengthen the university

curricula of the profession, to end the practice of considering nursing as an easy way to employ people without the appropriate studies, just for the numbers of unemployed to feel the EU criteria. To end the practice of putting numbers over real needs.

The European Union needs to send to all its citizens a strong message of relevance at this moment of fight against the virus. For the nurses who are serving our communities throughout Europe we call for more EU funded projects focusing on nursing regulation, continuous professional development, specialized training. We call for a strong position in favor of Nursing as a science, for a reinforcement of EU grants for nursing studies, for the abandonment of the old mentality in dealing with our profession.

We count on you to make sure that the sacrifices of nurses who are fighting at the front line against the deadly virus will be truly recognized in front of this unique situation. The time to leave behind the old ways has come! We have trust in you that our voice will be heard!

Now, more than ever, as our nurses are teaching us with their courage, we must all rise to meet the level of challenge that is upon us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mircea Timofte', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mircea Timofte
President of European Nursing Council- ENC
President of the The Order of Nurses and Midwives of Romania
Chief Nursing Officer, Ministry of Health of Romania