



European Nursing Council
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Brussels, 26/01/2024

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

I am writing to you in my capacity as President of the European Nursing Council (ENC), the organisation that brings together Nursing Regulators at the European level, in order to promote quality of Nursing, public health and safety, as well as patients' rights.

As you very well know, the pandemic has greatly increased the already high amount of pressure on EU's national healthcare systems. A consequence of this pressure was a sharp increase of mental health-related issues amongst citizens and health professional alike. According to Eurobarometer (2023), approximately 46% of citizens had an emotional or psychological problem in the last 12 months, and 25% reported encountering issues when trying to access adequate services.

These figures highlight the necessity to further promote the importance of mental health awareness and mental healthcare through innovative European policies and a new framework. They also call for measures to be implemented proactively in order to reinforce national healthcare systems' capacities, economically as well as socially, especially regarding patients encountering mental health problems.

We thus strongly feel that, in line with WHO's Call for more investment in mental healthcare, European Institutions should firstly encourage Member States to augment their allocated budgets, and secondly augment their own budget for relevant initiatives (currently €1.23 billion), for example the "Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health". An emphasis should be placed on redistributing funds better, as sometimes a too large proportion of them is being directed toward mental hospitals, at the detriment of community-based services and frontline specialised nursing care.

Moreover, it should become common conscience that all institutions (professional bodies, universities, etc.) that are active in the context of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) must put emphasis on constantly updating the skills of mental health professionals, including interns and recent graduates, keeping them up to date with recent scientific developments. Relevant policies regarding the above would benefit all citizens, and could significantly increase the efficiency of the advice and service proposed by our colleagues.

Finally, new healthcare policies must conform with both European sustainability and equality objectives. A progressively digitalised EU should require digitally skilled citizens and a coverage of telecommunication infrastructures that offer the opportunity to consult a nurse or attend CPD courses online. Of course, this coverage must not neglect Member States' rural zones.

Our membership is very eager to support the Commission's efforts with evidence and to work for the success of relevant EU policies. It is primordial for nurses and their patients, the citizens of the European Union to see that our institutions do learn the lessons of the past.

Thanking you for your attention to this letter,

Yours faithfully,

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

Mircea Timofte

President of ENC