



10 October 2015

Opatija, Croatia

Declaration

On the occasion of the Regional Summit held with Dr. Judith Shamian, President of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), and ICN's Board member and regional representative, Mr Peter Požun, on 10 October 2015 in Opatija, Croatia, the representatives of the National Nurses Associations of Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia have accepted this declaration which we share with our governments and other stakeholders.

We, the nurses and midwives from the above countries in ICN's Region 3, have encountered many similarities regarding education, competencies, employment and working conditions in which we practice nursing. Our patients have equal human rights, one of which is the right to accessible, safe healthcare services in accordance to their needs.

Evidence in Europe and many other regions demonstrates that, in order to serve our citizens at their time of need, we must have nurses with university level education who provide professional, quality and effective care in the best interest of patients. We recommend to our governments to take all the necessary actions to transform the education system in order to educate nurses and midwives responsible for delivering nursing care at university programmes which are harmonized with EU Directives and demonstrated by research as being the proper level of preparation for quality patient care.

For the nurses and midwives who were educated at the level of secondary vocational schools, we wish to provide the opportunity to obtain additional knowledge, in order that they can achieve university level education, which could be achieved through implementation of the 'bridging programmes' within the framework of academic public institutions.

We are calling on the governments to work with nursing organisations to develop and implement a plan to transform the education of nurses and to invest or/and seek the necessary financial resources from existing state budgets or EU Community funds for realisation of these programmes.

Furthermore, for the public interest, we call upon state officials to put stronger efforts into the process of legislation and put forward the Nursing Act and Midwifery Act in order to regulate the nursing and midwifery professions.

The current healthcare system is complex and requires both advanced knowledge and emotional maturity to deliver the care needed. We are concerned that our youth is expected to enter clinical practice without having the necessary emotional maturity to do so. We believe that this reality disadvantages both our youth and our patients.

In order to advance the health status of our citizens and to help the public to be productive members of society, we - the members of the nursing and midwifery profession as well as national representatives of nursing and midwifery associations, and members of ICN - wish to actively participate in the development and implementation of a plan and we offer you our support, expertise and knowledge. We pledge ourselves that we will motivate all our members in order to achieve the above mentioned goals.

National Associations present at the Summit:

Croatian Nurses Association

Alliance of Associations of Health Workers of Serbia

Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia

National Association of Nurses and Midwives of Montenegro

The National Association of Nurses and Midwives of Macedonia (MANM)

In the status of official observer:

Association of Nurses and Midwives of Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

International Council of Nurses (ICN)

Dr. Judith Shamian, President

Mg. Peter Požun, Board Member