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To whom it may Concern

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Concern: EFN solidary with Polish Nurses

Dear Sir/Madam,

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) has been informed by the Polish Nurses Association (member of EFN) about a new proposal amending the Law on the National Medical Emergency Services which regulates the organisation and operation of emergency care services in Poland. As we understand from our member, the amended legislation significantly broadens the scope of practice for paramedics, which will allow them to perform many medical activities in all types of healthcare institutions and will not be limited to emergency services only. Those activities were until now reserved to nurses and were not extended to other professionals because of the implications that they can have to the patients' health. EFN was extremely surprised with this development.

Nurses have a high level of education, with minimum standards being laid down in European legislation (Directive 2005/35/EC). Important efforts were made on both national and European level to make sure that this minimum level of education is sufficiently high to protect the patient and guarantee a well-functioning health system. The new set of competences that is included in the Directive is binding for all Member States since 18 January 2016, which was a milestone for the nursing community.

Therefore, it is with big surprise and disappointment that we see the changes that are being made in Poland. While so much effort is being made to make sure nurses are able and sufficiently trained to perform the tasks that are expected of them, this amended legislation takes an opposite view. It allows paramedics, who have a different level of education and who are trained for entirely different situations, to perform similar tasks. This does not only downgrade the profession of nursing, but, even more importantly, puts patients at risk!

EFN urges the Ministry of Health of Poland to revoke this amendment and not allow other professionals except for those having the appropriate education and training to perform tasks that only qualified professionals should be able to perform. The entire European nursing community firmly stands behind the requests and demands of our Polish member.

Paul De Raeve
EFN General Secretary

For your information: The European Federation of Nurses' Associations (EFN) represents over 35 National Nurses' Associations and its work has an effect 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.