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## To whom it may concern

Brussels, 23 June 2017

### **Concern: Nurses education in Montenegro prior EU Accession Negotiation**

Dear Prime Minister and Members of the government of Montenegro,

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) has been informed by our member association, the Nurses and Midwives Association of Montenegro (NUMSBCG) – that the Government of Montenegro is preparing changes to the nursing education at national level. Furthermore, the EFN is aware that Montenegro is in the process of accession to the European Union.

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 workforce and ensuring the willingness of young people to choose nursing as a careerpath. It is 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. This also applies to those national governments in the process of accession.

Furthermore, scientific evidence shows that increasing the entry requirements for nursing education leads to better recruitment rates, major attractiveness of the profession as well as better patient outcomes! The reality is that the large majority of EU Member States have already established mechanisms for ensuring a minimum of 12 years' general education or equivalent for the admission to nursing education, and nearly all of them have established their nursing programs at the university level.

It is important to keep in mind the binding European Directive 2005/36/EC (amended by Directive 2013/55/EU) on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and specifically Article 31, that includes a set of eight competences setting the minimum educational requirements for nurses responsible for general care, which any nurse in the EU must be able to perform independently. Non-compliance with the requirements set in the Directive has serious legal consequences for the Member State, starting with the European Commission assessing the national legislation and then starting infringement procedures for those countries that have not yet transposed the Directive into national law and implemented it into the curricula of all nursing schools.

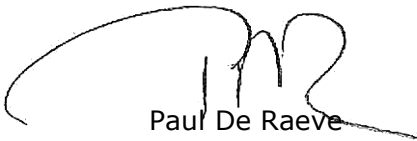
As an applicant country Montenegro is required to accept the Acquis before joining the EU, including chapter 3. The acquis must be incorporated by Montenegro into your national legal order by the date of your accession to the EU and you would be obliged to apply it from that date. Therefore, all nursing programmes in Montenegro need to comply with this Directive, and it is impossible to envisage a situation in which Montenegro would be admitted as a Member State of the EU if nursing education is not compatible with the Acquis.

The EFN fully supports the position of the Senate of the University of Montenegro regarding the decision of the Government of Montenegro on study programme for Higher Medical School of the Medical Faculty in Berane dated June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017.

The EFN urges all politicians and policy-makers in Montenegro to proactively comply with the Acquis and to support the University of Montenegro and Montenegrin nurses, as they are the cornerstone of your health system.

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!

Yours sincerely,



Paul De Raeve  
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.*