



**Mr. Duško Marković**

Prime Minister of the Government of  
Montenegro  
Karadjordjeva bb,  
81000 Podgorica  
Montenegro

Geneva, 11 July 2017

Subject: Nurses education in Montenegro

**Dear Prime Minister and Members of the government of Montenegro,**

We are writing to you as President and CEO of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) to raise our concern regarding the recent developments in the standard of nursing education in Montenegro.

At the recent meeting of the ICN Council of National Nursing Association Representatives in Barcelona, Spain, representatives from our member in Montenegro, the National Association of Nurses and Midwives of Montenegro (NUMSBCG) reported to us on the significant steps they had made in accreditation of a reformed nursing education programme, in collaboration with the University of Montenegro. We were pleased to hear that the proposal had been sent to the Ministries of Health and of Education for implementation.

Our understanding is that this accreditation has been carried out with respect to all strict criteria of this regulated profession, in compliance with the Directive of European Commission 2013/55, amended Directive 2005/36. The World Health Organization, the EU and ICN have a similar view that undergraduate nurse training programmes should be competency based and that nurses and midwives should be involved in the development of health care policy and implementation. We believe that Montenegro was on the verge of meeting these recommendations for nurse and midwifery education.

It was therefore with great consternation that we learned that these plans had been rejected by the Prime Minister's Office. As such, the current nursing programme in Montenegro is not only not in compliance with European directives and standards of the regulated profession, but neither does it fit with standards of quality education.

Evidence has shown that it is not only quantity but the quality of the nursing workforce that is important in patient outcomes. Recent research by Linda Aiken and colleagues shows that a better educated nursing workforce reduces unnecessary deaths. In fact, it showed that a 10% increase in the proportion of nurses with a bachelor degree is associated with a 7% decrease in the risk of death.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Aiken et al (2014) Nurse staffing and education and hospital mortality in nine European countries: a retrospective observational study, *The Lancet*, Volume 383, Issue 9931, Pages 1824 - 1830, 24 May 2014

One of the ten recommendations of United Nations High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth was to “scale up transformative, high-quality education and lifelong learning so that all health workers have skills that match the health needs of populations and can work to their full potential” They called for countries to prioritise investment in education, noting that “targeted investment in health systems, including in the health workforce, promotes economic growth.”

ICN wholeheartedly supports these recommendations and we, therefore, call upon you to ensure that Montenegro, at a minimum, meets the international recommendations for nurse and midwifery education.

ICN's member in Norway, the Norwegian Nurses Organisation, has been working in support of NUMSBCG to improve the standards of nursing education and training in your country for the benefit of the health of the people of Montenegro. We ask that you continue to work with them closely to raise the standards of nursing education in compliance with the stated European directives.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Annette Kennedy  
President



Dr. Frances Anne Hughes  
Chief Executive Officer

CC:

1. *Mr. Dragoljub Bulatović*, Chief of the Cabinet of the Government of Montenegro
2. *Mr. Kenan Hrapović PhD*, Minister of Health
3. *Mr. Damir Šehović PhD*, Minister of Education
4. *Mr. Aleksandar Pejović*, State Secretary for European Integrations and Chief Negotiator
5. *Prof. Radmila Vojvodić*, Rector of the University of Montenegro
6. *Prof. Živko Andrijašević, PhD* Council For Higher Education of the Government Of Montenegro
7. *Prof. Ranko Lazović, PhD*, Member - Council for Higher Education of the Government of Montenegro
8. *Ms. Mina Brajovic*, Head of Country Office, World Health Organization (WHO)
9. *Acc. Prof. Dr Goran Nikolić, Dean* -Medical Faculty of Podgorica
10. *Ms. Zorica Kovačević*, Director of the Clinical Centre of Montenegro
11. *Mr. Milo Djukanovic*, President of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS)