



Statement on

Accelerating primary health care strengthening in the WHO European Region

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The International Council of Nurses, The European Forum for National Nurses and Midwives Associations and The European Nursing Students Association, are longstanding collaborative organizations of WHO Euro. We welcome and support the resolution on Accelerating primary health care strengthening. The values on which primary health care are founded --solidarity, equity and participation--are also core values of the nursing and midwifery professions. Nurses and midwives are committed to the fundamental right of each individual to the highest attainable standard of health through universal health coverage (UHC) based on people-centered primary health care (PHC).

We welcome the document Accelerating PHC focusing on organizational and technological innovation in the context of the Astana Declaration. A strong primary health care system is essential to achieving universal health coverage, addressing health emergencies and promoting healthier populations. Acceleration of the transformation of health systems to a primary care focus is urgently needed in order to grapple with the major societal challenges of our ageing population, non-communicable diseases, reemergence of communicable diseases, increased migration and risks of health emergencies and must be addressed by all Member States in the region.

We submit that nurses and midwives as the largest professions in the health workforce in Europe are critical to each of the ten accelerators for strengthening PHC proposed in this important document. We support the adoption of a population health management approach that is people-centered with each individual being assigned to a primary care team based in the community. Nurses and midwives work close to people's homes and workplace in the community and are critical to empowering individuals, families and communities to be owners and advocates for their health. Nurses and midwives are critical to effective primary care teams. Moreover, nurse-led/midwife-led models are crucial to UHC and it has been found that when nurses and midwives practice to their full scope in team-based primary care settings, it is cost-effective, improves quality of care and increases patient satisfaction, access and equity.

Given the current and projected shortage of nurses and midwives in Europe, however, we submit that increased investment in nursing and midwifery education and training and improved practice environments must receive greater attention--as indicated in the document. The importance of decent working conditions and remuneration to recruit and retain nurses and midwives in the workforce is included in the Astana Declaration and deserves greater emphasis as an accelerator of primary health care.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe has a key role in supporting the Member States to accelerate the transition to PHC. We are pleased that nursing and midwifery were represented through the

European Forum (EFNNMA) on the Advisory Group on Primary Health Care. We are also delighted that ICN has been invited to participate on recent WHO Primary Health Care missions that focused on how nursing and midwifery are critical to primary health care. We look forward to further collaborative efforts aimed at achieving UHC through primary health care.

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations (NNAs), representing the more than 20 million nurses worldwide ICN works to ensure quality nursing care for all, sound health policies globally, the advancement of nursing knowledge, and the presence worldwide of a respected nursing profession and a competent and satisfied nursing workforce.

The European Forum of National Nurses and Midwives Associations (European Forum - EFNNMA) is the joint voice of nursing and midwifery in the WHO European Region and was established to promote the continuous development of the nursing and midwifery professions in all Member States in the region in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office

The European Nursing Students Association (ENSA) is the voice of national nursing student associations and student bodies across Europe established to promote quality nursing education in Europe and advocate for nursing students' rights.