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**To Deputy Prime Minister  
To Minister of Health  
To Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses  
To Whom It May Concern**

Brussels, 16 June 2022

**Concern: European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) support to Malta Union of Midwives & Nurses**

Dear Deputy Prime Minister  
Dear Minister of Health,  
Dear Mr. Christopher Fearne,

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) has been informed by our member association, the Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses, that the Maltese Government is taking MUMN to Court after the union protests and conflicts with the health minister due to the huge shortage of nurses in Malta.

It is unacceptable, that in 2022, a government takes an organisation to court - as it is the case for MUMN - for addressing the reality in the Maltese healthcare system. This action is highly condemnable in a so-called democratic country where there is a huge shortage of nurses and where nurses & midwives are being unjustly targeted by their government for fighting for their legitimate rights, as other health care professionals in the sector. As such, the European Federation of Nurses Association representing over 3 million nurses from 36 European Union member national nursing organisations, stands in solidarity with the Malta Union of Midwives & Nurses.

The compliment of the nurses and staffing ratios are all time low due to direct poaching of Maltese and Foreign nurses working in Malta. Therefore, we urge the health minister to address the huge shortage of nurses immediately to build a resilient healthcare workforce. Resilience implies developing a supporting strategy for recruitment and retention. This is urgently needed! Last year alone, more than 400 nurses resigned from the nursing workforce. The nursing and midwifery professionals are taking the biggest impact on their daily duties due to the huge shortage of nurses. Having two important professionals risking their own lives being at bedside 24/7, caring for those in need. The Maltese government cannot keep on ignoring the burnout and the stress of the nurses, post COVID-19 pandemic. It clearly gives a message to all nurses and midwives that there is no respect towards these two professions.

During the COVID19 pandemic, nurses remained working day and night, with incredible shifts and no breaks or holiday, who through their relentless commitment, expertise, professionalism, bravery, care for the most vulnerable Maltese citizens. This pandemic has for sure demonstrated the added value of the nursing workforce to the European healthcare ecosystems: working at the frontline of care, at the bedside with the patients, and providing the evidence that nurses' competencies are central to the functioning of healthcare systems in the EU. The COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed the value of well prepared and educated nurses which leads to lower mortality rates and better patient outcomes. Nurses play an essential role in the provision of safe and quality healthcare. Despite the ongoing challenges they are facing and the difficult and stressful working conditions, nurses continue to tackle the situations with incredible strength and dedication to ensure the smooth functioning of the healthcare systems and the well-being of their patients.

From a European Commission perspective, it is acknowledged that more investment to build the foundations for a more resilient health system and better preparation for possible future health crises. This depends to a considerable extent on having a high-quality health workforce of sufficient capacity and with the right skills. A resilient future-proof health ecosystem is urgently needed with a specific focus on the use of the EU Recovery & Resilient Funds. This is necessary to respond to the major healthcare challenges that COVID-19 put boldly on the political table: the resilient health and care workforce, the care left undone and the digitalisation of the healthcare services. Nurses are facing huge shortages, lack of protection, heavy workload, and low wages. It is time to address in a systematic way the recruitment and retention of frontline nurses. In these difficult times, creating resilient healthcare systems is a fundamental starting point to support nurses at the frontline.

It is time for the Maltese government to invest in a resilient Nursing Workforce to address the growing nursing shortage. It is imperative that the Malta government takes it seriously and engages with the Malta Union of Midwives & Nurses. Nursing workforce is the backbone of the healthcare ecosystem and the most trusted healthcare professional closer to patients.

The European Union fully respects the contribution and potential of nurses to deliver on European wide health policies and initiatives. It is crucial that national governments respect professional and regulatory dialogue as outlined in the Proportionality Directive (2018/958), requiring governments to engage with all concerned stakeholders, co-designing better working environments. Together we can achieve more, and it is key that political players respect the contribution of the nursing profession and continue to support frontline nurses.

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.*