

Bratislava, 28. 2. 2022

Madam President.

Mr Secretary - General.

Dear EFN members.

The strength of cohesion and international cooperation of our nursing community must be stable, despite the military conflicts in the world. We, nurses are the pillars of health care and we bring comfort to all without distinction, even in times of crisis, misery and suffering.

The citizens of Slovakia and, of course, the nurses are very sensitive to what is happening in our eastern neighbour in these minutes. The Ukrainian nation is very close to ours. We are united by a common history, Slavic culture and language. Many Ukrainians work for us, they live with us with their families. A large number of young Ukrainian students study at our universities, not excluding nursing schools.

The conflict is taking place behind our border. There is an even greater fear among the population that it may spread to us. We are a member of the EU, NATO, but we remember the period before 1989, when we were also part of the Eastern bloc. Our people remember the year 1968, when the Warsaw Pact troops occupied Czechoslovakia, and only because we wanted to live in a free democratic country. The last Russian soldiers left in 1991. We understand Ukraine all the more.

After the invasion of the territory of Ukraine began, we were asked for help by our colleagues - nurses and midwives from Ukraine, with whom we have been in contact for a long time and several times at various educational events. We are ready to do our utmost to provide the necessary help and support, to provide refuge and security. We have already offered our own apartments and houses and we expect the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. We organize humanitarian aid collections in cooperation with other humanitarian organizations. We are ready and determined to transform the spirit of our profession into real assistance to the people of Ukraine, including nurses and midwives and their families.

Nursing faculties are also being involved in the assistance, nurses report as volunteers and want to help at borders where the number of refugees is growing (mostly women with children), the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic is setting up contact addresses for volunteers and health care providers, HOT-SPOTs are being set up, First aid will be provided for war refugees at the border crossings Ubl'a, Ulič, Veľké Slemence and Vyšné Nemecké. This will always be done by two health professionals as part of their volunteering activities.

We will certainly help our neighbours and provide them with the shelter and help they urgently need at the moment. The Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives expresses its support for our colleagues from Ukraine. The power of the nurses will overcome pandemics and we will overcome wars.

Madam President.

We must send a clear and common signal to President Putin. We nurses reject any conflict that results in pain, suffering, and loss of life. We demand an immediate end of the military conflict in Ukraine. Europe needs stability, peace and prosperity for all nations. Let's learn from history and do not repeat the mistakes of the past!

Yours sincerely

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