



European Federation
of Nurses Associations



European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN GAMIAN-Europe

09 July 2020

Joint Statement: Supporting Frontline Nurses' Mental Health and Wellbeing - COVID-19 Preparedness

The ongoing COVID-19 outbreak is getting under control in most EU Member States. However, the risk of a second wave of infections is high; our frontline nurses and healthcare systems need to be well prepared for this event.

The COVID-19 pandemic is taking a huge toll on EU citizens, healthcare systems and, more specifically, frontline nurses. Frontline nurses represent the biggest healthcare profession dealing with COVID-19 patients on a daily basis. IN many cases, these nurses have been working heavy shifts in very poor working conditions, lacking appropriate and sufficient protective equipment, suffering from anxiety and psychological stress, making life-or-death decisions. Thus, they are putting their mental health and wellbeing at risk.

For all the reasons outlined above, the EFN and GAMIAN-Europe are jointly calling on the EU institutions, all EU Member States, the health industry and all other health stakeholders to:

1. Put in place national and local programmes to support frontline nurses who are caring for COVID-19 patients to preserve their mental health and avoid psychological trauma
2. Condemn and combat the stigmatisation of nurses taking care of COVID-19 patients e.g. by means of official communications, also making use of the media.
3. Foster the co-creation and co-design of political decision-making processes involving frontline nurses, concerning Infectious Disease of High Consequence preparedness, health protocols, training, and the selection of appropriate equipment.
4. Work closely with the nursing professions to develop policies that protect nursing staff from unnecessarily difficult or unsafe working conditions, particularly when caring for COVID-19 patients.
5. Allocate EU funds to support frontline nurses, re-allocating already agreed on budgets to inject funds into the nursing frontline and nursing research, with the aim to be better prepared for future COVID-19 waves.

The EFN and GAMIAN-Europe remind the EU institutions and all the above-mentioned stakeholders that frontline nurses are facing a critical situation – and this is where the focus should be now. By applying the five measures listed above, frontline nurses would be protected from some unnecessary stress and mental suffering. They need time and resources to recover from the first COVID-19 wave - mentally and physically - before tackling the next one.

Finally, the EFN and GAMIAN-Europe would like to offer their expertise and commitment to the EU institutions and all the above-mentioned stakeholders. We remain at your full disposal to make sure that EU decision reflects frontline nurses' views and needs. Together, we can make EU actions fit-for-purpose.

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