



MINISTERSTVO ZDRAVOTNICTVÍ  
ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY

Miloslav LUDVÍK  
ministr

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Dear Mr. General Secretary of the European Federation of Nurses Associations,

I received your letter regarding your concerns about changes in the system of education of general care nurses in the Czech Republic, and hereby let me state my opinion.

At the beginning I would like to appreciate the concern of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) about education of general nurses in the Czech Republic, and their situation in general. Hereby I would like to reassure EFN that we are aware of the importance of proper setting of the educational scheme and the necessity to ensure its compliance with the European directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU) on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Medical professions belong to very challenging jobs, and human resources are the most important element of the whole health care system and the decisive factor for the quality of provided health care services.

However, in recent years, the Czech Republic has been facing nursing personnel shortages in health care facilities. Lack of general nurses is closely related with overload of nursing personnel, growing physical and, above all, mental stress, worsening of working conditions, decreasing motivation and willingness to work in health care services, while all that is happening on the background of aging population and imminent global threats. We have to solve this problem.

At present, a proposal for changes in the training scheme for general nurses in the Czech Republic is in the legislative process. The proposed changes, however, do not worsen in any way the contents and quality of the general nurse training and do not contravene Directive 2005/36/EC.

With effectuating the proposed changes, we expect improvement of motivation and working conditions, as well as work opportunities for healthcare professionals, and thereby stabilization of non-physician medical professions, especially nursing. The effort also aims at increasing the willingness of young people to choose nursing as





a professional career. It can be expected that the nurse overload shall decrease, and the care for patients shall be carried out by a sufficient number of competent health care workers under less physical and mental stress. This will secure the quality of provided health care services and security of patients because the health care services shall be secured by a sufficient number of nursing employees with necessary knowledge, capabilities, and last but not least, competence and powers.

The aim of the proposed changes is to set a new concept of nursing professions training, and so to achieve such situation that, within the training process at health-care professions training providers, the graduates would receive training for necessary and practical health-care professions in greater extent than up to date, without unnecessary costs for the government budget.

Currently, the training of general nurses in the Czech Republic is achieved either in a three-year course at higher professional schools with the specialization "General Nurse", or in a three-year bachelor study for "Graduate Nurse" at colleges/universities. These types of study remain without any changes. Such study can be taken after 9 years at elementary schools and a 4-year study at high schools (therefore, the applicants for general nurse courses must have achieved the education in the duration of 13 years, which is in compliance with the requirement of Article 31 of Directive 2005/36/EC). The graduates of such courses (Graduate General Nurses) join the health care system after 17 years of education in total, which is approximately at the age of 23.

Beyond the scope of said qualification training, general nurses can take other types of follow-up education. This can be achieved within master study programs at colleges/universities or within specialized training in the fields of intensive care, perioperative care, psychiatric nursing care, internal and surgery care etc.

The proposed change newly offers the General Nurse professional specialization to applicants who have already achieved the qualification of a health care assistant, midwife, medical rescuer or pediatric nurse.

The above mentioned health care workers will be given the opportunity to take a shortened General Nurse course at higher professional schools. It is a study which is fully in compliance with Directive 2005/36/ES (Article 31 and Schedule 5.2.1). Insofar as this opportunity regards graduate health care workers who have already completed a similar training program, they will be able to receive credits for identical parts of the training program, which they had already completed. So, the period of their General Nurse study shall be shortened, but the level of knowledge and capabilities shall not be decreased in any way. Shortening of study shall be achieved by the admission to a higher year of study.







The prerequisite for shortening of the professional training for health care workers shall be meeting the requirement to prove knowledge and capabilities at the level necessary for progression to the relevant higher year of the higher professional study (shall be achieved within the admission procedure).

As far as the contents of the study is concerned, the shortened study shall be in compliance with the current study programs provided at higher professional schools, while medical assistants, medical rescuers, midwives or pediatric nurses shall target at graduation only in those subjects which are not identical with the ones completed in their former course. This regulation, at least in the beginning of its implementation, should increase motivation of people to pursue studies and receive the General Nurse qualification.

This proposal is fully in compliance with Article 31(3), second sentence, of Directive 2005/36/EC, where "**Member States may grant partial exemptions to persons who have received part of their training on courses which are of at least an equivalent level.**" With a modification of the proposed exemption, compliance with the Directive shall be secured and no pecuniary sanctions threaten for non-compliance with the rules for receiving training under the Directive.

By the said proposal, the requirement for the general nurse qualification being achieved only after a three-year course at a higher professional school/college/university shall not be prejudiced, but quite on the contrary, preserved. The proposed modification only enables to provide a partial exemption (from the condition under the Directive to receive training in the duration of at least 3 years, with at least 4 600 hours of training) for those health care workers, who had completed any part of the training in a previous course (medical assistant, medical rescuer, midwife or pediatric nurse training).

With best regards,

Sir  
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EFN General Secretary

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