



# Welcome message from the President of the Ordem dos Enfermeiros

(EFN General Assembly)

Dear Madam President, EFN members, colleagues and friends,

As President of the Ordem dos Enfermeiros, I would like to welcome you all to the **112<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the European Federation of Nurses Associations**, a Federation that represents more than 1 million nurses in Europe.

This General Assembly was initially programmed to occur in Lisbon, but unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic didn't allow us to meet in person.

We are living turbulent times, the health situation across Europe is still extremely uncertain and delicate. The impact of the pandemic on the economy and society are unprecedented.

What began with isolated cases quickly turned into a pandemic that affected every country, region and person. Since the beginning of this health emergency, too many lives have been lost in Europe, many more have lost their lives in other parts of the world.

Today, and every day, as ICN stated, we should remember those who have lost their lives in the pandemic, and the nurses and other healthcare workers who are counted among them. We must also think of the hundreds of thousands of nurses who have cared for the sick and the dying during this crisis, often at great personal cost. Many of them are exhausted, and with no end to the traumas in sight, they have been left feeling burned out, anxious or depressed. For them, and for those among them who will experience post-traumatic stress disorder, there is a long road of recovery ahead.

Nurses are the backbone of all communities and with growing healthcare demands, we cannot allow the number of experienced nurses to continue to leave the profession. There is an urgent need to support and retain our current workforce.

We need to make our voice heard and we need urgent actions from governments, including making improvements to pay and working conditions, and provide the appropriate mental health support to help them deal with the traumas of the past year.

While thousands of priority people are still waiting for the vaccine, health professionals included, governments linger on taking affirmative actions to deal with these problems.

EFN has an important role to play in this scenario. As representative of the nurses across Europe, EFN must take our voices and our concerns into the European leaders.

Because nurses must be heard and taken in consideration in each political discussion taken in every country related with health policies. We are beside our patients, helping and supporting them in every step of their health pathway, and we are not seen as a fundamental part of the health systems.

We are the most representative health profession and we must be respected and seen by political leaders as THE KEY ELEMENT to fundamentally transform our Health Systems and communities.

Many thanks to you all for your cooperation and unity!!

“No one is alone!!”

Muito obrigada!!