



Nurses in the Nordic countries call for political action to stop unequal salaries

The nurses in the six Nordic countries, gathered under the Nordic Nurses Federation, stand together for a joint appeal to their governments and politicians to deal with the unfair pay gap between women-dominated jobs and male-dominated jobs with the same level of education.

A review of salary conditions in the Nordic countries¹ show that the gap between men and women with educations at bachelor level is around 20 percent. The overall picture shows that the typical female dominated job areas, such as nurses, have a salary level that is around 80 percent of the salary of male dominated jobs which has the same level of education.

It is a continuous part of the Nordic labour markets that wage formation takes place between the social partner and we have a deep respect for this model. Unfortunately, the story shows that these free negotiations cannot solve the problem or deliver the solution when it comes to unequal pay for equal education. We therefore face a political problem created in the past where women were not counted as caregivers. And therefore, on behalf of the 320.000 nurses in the Nordic countries, we demand political action.

The changing needs of the 21st Century mean nurses have an even greater role to play in the future. However, the shortage of nurses in the Nordic countries is a fact, and the politicians and policy makers cannot ignore the significance of pay and decent working conditions as a factor influencing recruitment and retention of nurses.

The unequal wage for nurses was on the agenda at the Nordic Nurses Federation founding meeting i 1920. Now – almost 100 years later – it is time that our politicians show the courage to deal with the inequalities of the past and give nurses the wage and reputation they deserve.

Best regards, the six Nordic Nurses Organisation, gathered in Reykjavik September 2018

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¹ Equal pay and working conditions, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2018