



**PRESS RELEASE – 14 MAY 2020**

## **European Medical Organisations condemn attacks on healthcare professionals fighting the COVID-19 pandemic**

Following the alarming reports of cases of violence, discrimination and exclusion that physicians and other healthcare professionals across Europe have been facing because of the fear they will spread the Coronavirus, European Medical Organisations reaffirm that they stand in complete solidarity with their colleagues who are in the front line of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

European Medical Organisations strongly condemn the stigma that physicians and other healthcare professionals dealing with infected patients are facing on a daily basis, both inside and outside the workplace. This unacceptable behaviour poses a huge risk to the physical and psychological health of physicians and other health professionals. Such traumatizing experiences lead healthcare staff to be ostracized and, in some cases, pressured to move out of their own homes, as well as discriminated against, physically attacked and verbally threatened and abused. Furthermore, in most of these cases, these victims do not disclose their experiences to the appropriate authorities because they have to keep focusing on the fight against the virus and therefore no legal action is being taken.

The on-going pandemic has reaffirmed physicians' central role in ensuring the stability and wellbeing of our societies. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March of this year, European Medical Organisations marked [the first ever European Awareness Day on Violence against Doctors and other Health Professionals](#) and committed themselves to act against this disturbing problem. We call on European governments and health authorities to achieve a zero-tolerance policy for violence against healthcare staff, to provide them with a safe working environment and adequate personal protective equipment while they are in the front line, and to deploy all necessary means to protect the physical and psychological integrity of our colleagues during this pandemic and beyond. These healthcare professionals, whom we applaud, deserve admiration, respect and protection. European Medical Organisations also pay tribute to all healthcare professionals who sadly lost their lives in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.