04 June 2026

To: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Poland

Ul. Miodowa 15

00-952 Warszawa

Dear Minister of Health,

I am writing on behalf of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) to express our concern over the ongoing discussions concerning the future of midwifery education in Poland.

ICM is the global organisation representing professional midwifery associations in more than 110 countries and is committed to strengthening the midwifery profession and advancing high-quality care for women, newborns, families and communities worldwide.

We understand that discussions are currently taking place regarding potential reforms to the education pathway for becoming a midwife in Poland, including proposals whereby individuals would first complete nursing education before undertaking midwifery education. While countries may adopt different models of education and regulation, we wish to highlight several internationally recognised principles that should guide any reform.

Midwifery is an autonomous profession with its own body of knowledge, professional identity, philosophy of care and scope of practice. This principle is recognised in international standards, including the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education and the ICM Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice.

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The quality of midwifery education is directly linked to the quality and safety of care provided to women, newborns and families. Midwives require specialised preparation to support pregnancy and birth, recognise complications, provide sexual and reproductive healthcare, and deliver respectful, woman-centred care.

The World Health Organization has consistently highlighted the importance of investing in a strong, educated and regulated midwifery workforce. WHO guidance recognise the importance of education pathways specifically designed to prepare professionals for the full scope of midwifery practice. Likewise, ICM's Global Standards emphasise the importance of coherent educational programmes that prepare midwives to practise autonomously and to their full scope.

ICM also notes that direct-entry midwifery education is a well-established and internationally recognised model used successfully in many countries around the world. Poland is one of these countries, with an established direct-entry midwifery education system that has successfully prepared qualified midwives for many years. Where such programmes are functioning effectively, there is little evidence to support replacing them with alternative models, as they provide an important pathway for developing competent, autonomous midwives and fostering a strong professional identity from the beginning of professional education, which in turn contributes to improved quality of care and better health outcomes for women, newborns and families.

Any reform of midwifery education should therefore be assessed primarily on its likely impact on the quality, safety and continuity of care provided to women, newborns and families.

Finally, ICM wishes to emphasise the importance of meaningful consultation. Any reforms concerning midwifery education should be developed in partnership with midwives, professional associations, educators and academic institutions, whose expertise is essential in evaluating the implications of proposed changes.

ICM respectfully encourages policymakers in Poland to ensure that any future reforms strengthen rather than weaken midwifery education, professional identity and autonomous practice. Protecting high-quality midwifery education is an investment in the health and wellbeing of women, newborns, families and communities.

The International Confederation of Midwives remains available for dialogue and would welcome the opportunity to provide further information regarding international standards and evidence relating to midwifery education.

Best regards,

Anna af Ugglas

Chief Executive

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