

To:

FNV, Ms. Jong, vice-chair

LAD (*National society* of employee physicians), Ms. Booi, chair

CNV Care & Welfare (union for care professionals), Ms. Westerlaken, chair

FBZ union for care professionals, Mr. M. Faas, chair

Our reference 21.02411/DK/GvE

Date 22-9-2021

### **NFU response to four unions letter dated 17/9/2021**

Dear Ms. Jong, Ms. Booi, Ms. Westerlaken and Mr. Faas,

In consultation with Ms. Schneider, NFU chair, we are responding in this letter to the content of your letter dated 17 September 2021 about the cao agreement concluded between the NFU and NU'91.

The NFU emphatically distances itself from your comment that we are creating antagonism on the workforce. With this cao agreement we are taking a step towards a more balanced wage structure. As the promised additional funding has still not been awarded, we have decided to improve the wage development. This cao agreement addresses the gap in the lagging wages for the middle groups in patient care to help them catch up. This gap developed over time, as confirmed in the SER advisory report.

Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention expressly to the following: you state in your letter that a large proportion of the employees will receive 1% or 3.5% permanent salary increase in the coming years, although inflation is forecast by the CPB to be 4.8% for 2021-2023. Let us look at your figures more closely. The inflation is partially compensated by the sum of various measures starting from the current year:

1. By the wage increase of 3% implemented in August 2020 that continues in 2021.
2. By tax measures for 2021 that ensure employees in the lower tax scales keep more of their salary.
3. By a one-off bonus of €750 or 3.5% paid out in January 2022 as compensation for the extension of the cao over 2021.
4. By 1% or 3.5% permanent salary increase in August 2022.
5. The percentage of the permanent salary increase in 2023 is not yet known, but the average cao increase in the market can be taken as a guideline. This forms an essential component of the agreements.

In your letter and in your communication to umc employees, you have unfortunately missed out this total picture, which leads to an overly restricted image of reality.

There are still more uncertainties expected, like future tax measures and the salary increase in 2023. Unfortunately, the cao cannot guarantee the inflation and purchasing power for *everyone*. We are also unhappy about that fact. But there are simply not sufficient financial means available right now. The umcs have consciously decided to improve the income of the middle groups working in patient care.



In addition to the above, each employee has a personal income development path (for example, the next step in their salary scale, working more or fewer hours), and various factors in their personal financial and family situation and spending pattern influence their purchasing power. This differs from individual to individual, and we shall not consider it here.

We have observed that the unions' wishes keep piling up without any choices being made. It is impossible for us to fulfil them given the limited financial means. We would have preferred to do more for all umc employees, but we are dependent on the Cabinet for additional funding to improve the labour conditions. A majority of the House of Representatives has also spoken out in favour of this, but the money is not yet forthcoming from the government. Once the additional funding becomes available, we shall discuss around the cao table how to distribute it among all employees.

We find it regrettable that you describe the urgency to improve the imbalance in incomes as pitting colleagues against each other. This was not our intention. In our view, it is in our mutual interest that money from the government must go to healthcare and to care personnel. The umc employees deserve it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the appreciation expressed by society for the care professionals was immense. It is time to translate this appreciation into investment. Let us therefore work together towards that and continue our dialogue.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the NFU cao delegation,

Karen Kruijthof

Gabriël Zwart