

Statement by the Executive Board at Erasmus MC

Erasmus MC is a university medical centre, which means that it is a faculty in a hospital setting. Taking that hospital role into account, it is essential that people who need help do not come up against any additional barriers when seeking the care they need. Many people find it difficult enough going to hospital at all. After all, it is important for hospitals to always be accessible and safe for people who are in need of help. This should apply regardless of background, religion, past deeds, etc. This is why, for many years, the policy on room use at Erasmus MC's Education Centre has been that associations are welcome, provided their meetings are not about politics or religion or of a commercial nature.

Confused by the subtitle of today's lecture, there were initially some doubts about this at the Education Centre. The request was then forwarded to the vice-dean and the Executive Board of Erasmus MC. Both said that the lecture could go ahead if the subtitle was removed. So, the Executive Board did not say the lecture could not take place but instead indicated its commitment to the neutral stance we want to take to conflicts happening around the world. The organisers of the lecture agreed to remove the subtitle under protest.

The terrible conflict in Gaza is a major concern for many and is stirring up a lot of emotion. We completely understand the need this conflict has created for health care providers and students to organise medical, in-depth lectures on the dynamics of medical care in conflict zones and the legal protection of health care workers. We applaud them for this and are more than happy to make time and space available to them at Erasmus MC.

As mentioned earlier, we learn from past events. For example, some time ago, Erasmus MC chose to raise the Ukrainian flag – which many other organisations did too. We heard later that this had made some colleagues and patients from Russia uncomfortable; some people even felt unsafe. We did not realise this enough at the time.

Human suffering is devastating, which is why staff at Erasmus MC work day and night to do everything they can to help people in need. This is the reason why people choose to work in the health care sector and also why our mission is to promote health care via research and education. Unfortunately, decisions sometimes have to be made that are not supported by everyone. This is inevitable in a large organisation like Erasmus MC, which has 18,000 staff, more than 4,000 students, almost 700,000 patients a year and a

multitude of other people who have opinions about Erasmus MC. Erasmus MC is very aware that one person's views will not necessarily always be the same as another person's views. That is human nature and also the strength that comes from diversity and inclusiveness. However, it can also cause emotions to run high sometimes. Situations like these call for understanding, leniency towards each other and communication.