

Advancing the Public Health Advocacy: A Manifesto  
03 May 2023, World Congress on Public Health, Rome

**A UNITED CALL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION AND ADVOCACY CENTRED ON:  
PEOPLE AND PLANET, EVIDENCE, TRUST, PARTNERSHIP, INVESTMENT**

Public Health is recognised as the science and art of preventing disease, promoting health and prolonging life through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organisations, public and private, communities and individuals. Public Health is thus called upon to use evidence-based best practice approaches for action-orientated interventions to protect the health and well-being of all. To be effective in today's connected world, it must do so on a '**glocal**' scale, reflecting both local and global considerations, with **people** and planetary health front and centre. As underlined by the theme of the 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Public Health (WCPH), we find ourselves in 'A World in Turmoil'. It is a World still reeling from the repercussions of global pandemic while facing conflicts in multiple regions, and impacted by environmental degradation and the escalating real effects of climate change. These destabilizing factors have only further exacerbated the **wicked problems** of health and social inequalities, within and between countries, with large parts of the population still left out of health service provision, marginalised communities living in extreme poverty, living with homelessness, and unprecedented numbers fleeing violence, persecution, resource depletion and extreme climate events. Concurrently, the public has been inflamed and mitigation efforts stymied by the scale of misinformation and direct opposition to evidence-based policy making. The public health and allied primary health care communities have been ill-positioned to respond to the mounting challenges after extended periods of austerity and lack of investment that has led to an erosion of capacity.

It is in recognition of the multiplicity of adversity, that the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) and the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) have come together on the occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> WCPH to call for **Concerted Public Health Advocacy. We must act now!**

Considering the gravity of the current moment, ASPHER and EPHA are issuing a **call for action** for systematic cooperation and collaboration of all who support Public Health's core values rooted in *scientific evidence-based knowledge, inter-disciplinarity and inter-sectorality, respect and compassion for diversity, solidarity and inclusivity*. Five actions are preconditions for success to advance public health universally and advocate for the common good:

- I. **Putting people and the planet front and centre** must be first amongst public health considerations and interventions.
- II. **Quality, evidence-based science** should be the foundation of public health interventions and training of public health professionals to make the greatest impact over the shortest time.
- III. **Trust in science** needs to be proactively restored, and bad faith actors and misinformation actively rebutted.
- IV. **Active working partnerships** must be nurtured such that all Public Health communities - from experts and policy makers, over training and education programmes, to civil society and the public - collaborate as one, in an action-orientated and proactive manner, with specific and actionable commitments.
- V. **Sufficient investment** is critical to ensure that this collaboration is impactful, robust and sustainable. Specific constituencies that need proactive support include national public health institutes; public health training and education programmes; civil society organisations including those of marginalised or discriminated groups; local authority leaders and city mayors; legislators and parliamentarians; young public health activists; and public health professionals.

The 17<sup>th</sup> WCPH rightly identifies the 'opportunity to foster collaboration and co-creation of a vision informed by our professional knowledge and that of the communities we serve.' We call all Public Health actors to take this opportunity and to effectively advocate for a concerted evidence-based action to safeguard the health of the public and planet.