



To Prime Minister Netanyahu, Minister of Health Moshe Arbel, and IMA chair, Prof. Zion Hagay
Jerusalem
Israel



Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu,
Dear Minister of Health Moshe Arbel,
Dear IMA chair, Prof. Zion Hagay,

The European Public Health Association (EUPHA) is an umbrella organisation representing 45 national associations of public health, including the Israeli Association of Public Health Physicians; and the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) is an umbrella organisation representing over 120 schools and programmes of public health, including four institutions of higher education in Israel (Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, University of Haifa and Ashkelon Academic College). We are writing to you concerning their letter of 22nd June, concerning the proposal to amend the Israeli Basic Law.

Since its formation, the state of Israel has provided an exemplar for other countries, implementing a high-quality health system providing universal coverage. Its public health community, in particular, has made major contributions to our understanding of the determinants of health and how to respond to them. However, as in all countries, this is not always easy. The association has documented, in its letter to you, examples of where it was necessary to use the Israeli courts to ensure the implementation of health-promoting policies. While we recognise that this may not always be a comfortable situation for governments, having such a mechanism is an important safeguard to ensure the health of the public as well autonomy and professionalism in medicine, something we are sure that you value in the same way that we do.

We are also concerned about the consequences of this proposed amendment beyond Israel. In particular, the proposal sets a very bad example for other countries where the rule of law is weaker. It will make it easier for those individuals and organisations prioritising their own interests over the health of their populations to implement harmful policies.

The arguments advanced by our Israeli colleagues will be supported by the international public health community. We urge you to take full account of them in your decision making.

Sincerely,

Iveta Nagyova
EUPHA President

Carlo Signorelli
ASPHER President