

**EU Health Policy Platform**  
**Thematic Network on Public Health Workforce Development and Professionalization**

The Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER)

The European Public Health Association (EUPHA)

[ *insert name here* ]

**Call for action**

(v. 20-10-2016)

The Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and [ *insert name here* ] call for action on the continuing development of a sufficient and competent public health workforce in Europe.

*Recognizing:*

- The importance of living conditions for the health, wellbeing and longevity of the European populations and the negative effects of the increasing social and economic inequalities in health;
- The growing burden on health systems due to the ageing, vulnerable populations, multi-comorbidities, non-communicable and rare diseases and mental health problems;
- The variation in health and social systems in EU member states;
- The vital role of the interdisciplinary and inter-professional public health workforce in addressing all the above;
- The importance of the development of public health leadership knowledge and skills at academic and professional level to help tackle effectively complex system challenges;
- The lack or insufficient attention to the development of public health workforce and its professionalization in Europe;
- The lack of supportive legal and regulatory structures for the credentialing of Public Health qualifications at the EU level;
- The lack of the concerted action involving all interested stakeholders to give prominence to assuring the development, implementation and sustainability of the public health workforce development mechanisms, structures and tools.

*Action is needed in the following areas:*

**1. Ensuring population-covering public health programmes, strategies and policies**

Ensuring that national, regional and local populations of EU member states are covered by comprehensive, coherent, cost effective and ethically optimal public health programmes, strategies and policies, under professional public health leadership – in balance with good public health theory and practice founded on scientific evidence.

**2. Strengthening the public health workforce structure**

Delineating and agreeing on the all-embracing and inclusive definition of public health workforce mindful of its wide composition including: 1) *public health professionals* with a public health and/or health administration degree credentialing the education at the bachelor, master or doctorate level, including those who have received sufficient CPD training in public health; 2) *health and social care professionals* working in the frontline and contributing to public health, e.g. medical doctors and nurses; 3) *other professionals with an educational background other than health* but who work in the

area of public health both within and outside the public health services, e.g. lawyers and architects.

### **3. Strengthening public health education and workforce competences and capacity**

Mapping the existing public health workforce and public health education and training capacity in EU member states, followed by capacity development based on population health needs; defining and assessing the types of public health workforce needed to strengthen the health systems in Europe and their organisational capacity.

Pooling the existing and developing new resources, tools, and services to educate and train public health workforce; supporting faculty development and inter-professional education and training in teams; developing and providing inter-professional education and training in public health leadership; assuring that strong accreditation systems are in place to set standards in public health education and training.

Acknowledging the Public Health Core Competences in order to design, assess and enhance academic public health programmes at multiple levels; developing Public Health Professional Competences including: (1) general public health competences; (2) cross-disciplinary generic competences for all public health professionals including public health leadership and systems thinking; (3) professional discipline specific competences for specific groups of professionals; defining competency priorities.

### **4. Ensuring systematic and sufficient public health workforce planning**

Development of principles and systems for future public health workforce planning, based on (1) population health challenges, including disasters; (2) cost-effective strategies and interventions (defined by Essential Public Health Operations) needed to meet population health challenges; (3) the competences necessary for public health strategy and intervention planning, implementation and evaluation.

Developing and sustaining better pathways for public health careers; improving the recruitment and retention strategies so that public health career is high in the demand.

### **5. Public health workforce authorization and shaping the public health profession**

Developing public health professional standards and codes of conduct at European and EU member states level.

Ensuring sufficient professional authorization of the main categories of the public health workforce; initiating collaborative efforts towards establishing the regulatory arrangements for public health workforce, which will address the above points.

### **6. Strengthening the evidence base for public health policy, strategy and intervention making**

Ensuring the resources necessary to scientifically develop principles and methods of interventions needed to meet population health challenges adequately, and support dynamic knowledge brokering by schools and departments of public health as well as strong interaction between public health scientific research and public health practice, in order to ensure the creation and implementation of cost-effective and ethically optimal public health policies, strategies and interventions.

The co-signatories represent the professional public health community in Europe and are accountable in front of European populations and their democratically elected leadership and thus work for the common good. Members of the cosignatories have for decades been the backbone of public health in Europe, offering education, training, scientific research, care, social work, disease prevention, health promotion, health protection – and leadership of all these functions and population health policy and strategy development:

***The Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER)** is the key independent European organisation dedicated to strengthening the role of public health by improving education and training of public health professionals for both practice and research. ASPHER is a membership organisation of institutions, spread across EU and wider across WHO European Region, which are collectively concerned with the education and training, and professionalism, of those entering and working within the public health workforce. Founded in 1966, ASPHER currently has over 110 members in 43 countries in Europe.*

***The European Public Health Association (EUPHA)** is an international, multidisciplinary, scientific organisation, bringing together around 16'000 public health experts for professional exchange and collaboration throughout Europe. EUPHA's mission is to facilitate and activate a strong voice of the public health network by enhancing visibility of the evidence and by strengthening the capacity of public health professionals. EUPHA encourages a multidisciplinary approach to public health.*

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