



**Joint Statement on Public Health Workforce Development and Professionalisation:
Call for a collaborative and consensus-building action**



Aware of the different perspectives and initiatives with regard to strengthening the public health workforce, and taking into account the critical momentum in the relevant policy contexts, such as the Action Plan for the EU Health Workforce and the European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health Capacities and Services of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the above signatory organisations call for a collaborative and consensus-building action on the continuing development and professionalisation of the public health workforce in Europe.

- *Health* is a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) in itself, but also key to achieve the other SDGs.
- In order to achieve the SDGs, we need comprehensive and high-quality *public health systems*, which focus on delivering services to maintain health, prevent disease, promote health and well-being, and provide protection from environmental hazards. Some of these public health services may be delivered in the healthcare setting, but services in other sectors such as transport, education, CAM, and social care are of equal importance. Public health services are complementary to the traditional curative healthcare services, and take a whole-of-society approach.
- In order to achieve comprehensive and high-quality public health systems, we need appropriate cross sectoral engagement by all relevant health professionals in public health matters, cross sectoral engagement by professionals in the other relevant services and a competent and sufficient *public health workforce* to drive the necessary changes forward, deliver the public health services, and advocate for a healthier future. Coordination of public health actions and the various actors involved requires new *public health leadership*.
- In order to achieve a public health workforce that can deliver comprehensive and high-quality public health services, we need *to invest in its development* through the establishment of communication and coordination systems to engage all the relevant actors, clear roles and competences, education and training, attractive career paths, continuing professional development, needs assessment, and planning and forecasting.
- Within the public health workforce, we need to develop strong associations of public health professionals, to secure development of the public health role and competences of other professionals to be accountable for the continued development of the *public health discipline* and the *public health profession*, and to nurture strong leaders to lead the development, implementation and evaluation of public health strategies, programmes and services.

Therefore, a collaborative, interdisciplinary and inter-professional action is needed in:

1. Contributing to the development and support of comprehensive, sustainable and resilient European public health systems through investment in multi sectoral public health workforce.
2. Building and strengthening the specific public health workforce professional identity and the feeling of belonging.

3. Strengthening and upscaling public health competence-based education and training at all levels of public health and other health related curricula.
 4. Assuring the development and provision of adequate public health leadership and system thinking education and training to support public health workforce capacities.
 5. Facilitating the constructive inter-sectoral and inter-professional dialogue leading to:
 - a. The workforce authorisation, credentialing and qualifications registry based on regulations, professional assessment and recognition at national and European level.
 - b. The development or adaptation of the existent public health ethical frameworks and codes of conduct.
 6. Developing principles and systems for future public health workforce planning as well as public health career pathways.
 7. Strengthening the evidence base for public health policy, strategy and intervention making based on the capacities and potential of the public health workforce through collaboration and synergistic activities among various groups of professionals, also other agencies and actors, so that policies and strategies are able to respond effectively to population health challenges and threats.
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ASPHER led on the development of this Joint Statement in collaboration with various organisations and members of the EU Health Policy Platform. The list of signatories is presented below:

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. <http://www.aspher.org>

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. <http://www.eupha.org>

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) is a change agent – Europe's leading NGO advocating for better health. We are a dynamic member-led organisation, made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals, and disease groups working together to improve health

and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe. EPHA is a member of, among others, the Social Platform, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), and the Better Regulation Watchdog. <http://www.epha.org>

The **EuroHealthNet** is a not-for-profit partnership of public bodies working from local to regional, national and international levels across Europe. Our mission is to help build healthier communities and tackle health inequalities within and between European States. EuroHealthNet achieves this through its partnership framework by supporting members' work in EU and associated States through policy and project development, networking and communications. <http://www.eurohealthnet.eu>

EuroNet MRPH stands for the **European Network of Medical Residents in Public Health**. It constitutes the network of European National associations of Public Health training programs, including medical and non-medical residents. It is a non-profit, international, independent and non-governmental association. EuroNet MRPH aims to create a professional network among European residents in Public Health in order to share information on educational programs, to facilitate exchanges and common activities, as well as to develop a body of scientific research. <http://www.euronetmrph.org>

EUPHANxt is a unique network and platform within EUPHA for students and early career researchers, policymakers and professionals in the field of public health. EUPHANxt is a free and open initiative that aims to sensitize and involve the future generations into the European and multidisciplinary network of public health associations. EUPHANxt was established in 2011 and since then it is coordinated by young professionals and has grown into a network with almost 1300 subscribers. <http://eupha.org/euphanxt>

The **Young Forum Gastein (YFG)** initiative is a joint project of the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), the European Commission and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. It is aimed at young professionals from across Europe who are working in the field of health. The YFG scholarship was initiated in 2007, to enable promising young health professionals to attend the annual EHFG. It offers a unique opportunity to learn about current developments in Europe and to network with a number of high-level experts in the field of health and beyond. <http://www.ehfg.org/young-gastein.html>

The **Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC)** is the European organization for all Occupational Therapists through their National Associations, with the purpose of ensuring an adequate number of high quality occupational therapy practitioners and services in Europe. COTEC is a non-profit organisation, funded by annual membership subscription and represents 30 European Occupational Therapy Associations and more than 120,000 Occupational Therapists. <http://www.coteceurope.eu>

The **European Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing (EAHSA)** is the European integral platform of the providers of housing, services and care for the ageing sector. Members represent all types of organisations and individuals active for older persons and all types of ownership including for profit, not-for-profit and governmental organisations. EAHSA members represent more than 3,000 providers spread in 20 European countries. The Vision of EAHSA is to improve the quality of life for older persons and support its members in making each day a better day for their clients by providing high quality housing, services and care. <http://www.eahsa.eu>

The **European Federation for Complementary & Alternative Medicine (EFCAM)** is a Federation of European Federations of specific CAM modalities and national CAM umbrella organisations. Originating in December 2004 as a forum, before becoming a registered not for profit association, it has become the major voice for practitioners of CAM in Europe embracing some 20 CAM modalities in 23 countries. <http://www.efcam.eu>

The **European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO)** is the European umbrella organisation which represents the interests of optometrists and opticians from 25 countries. It aims to promote eye

health to the public across borders and to harmonise clinical and educational standards of optometric and optical practice throughout Europe. <http://www.ecoo.info>

The **European Coalition for Vision (ECV)** is an alliance of professional bodies, patient groups, European NGOs, disabled people's organisations, trade associations representing suppliers and research groups. We exist to raise the profile of eye health and vision, help prevent avoidable visual impairment and secure an equal and inclusive society for those with irreversible blindness or low vision in Europe. <http://www.ecvision.eu>

The **UK Faculty of Public Health (FPH)** is a Faculty of the three Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK and was established in 1972 as the professional body for specialist public health consultants. We are committed to improving and protecting people's mental and physical health and well-being. Our vision is for better health for all, where people are able to achieve their fullest potential for a healthy and fulfilling life through a fair and equitable society. FPH work to promote understanding and to drive improvements in public health policy and practice. As the leading professional body for public health professionals in the UK, our members are trained to the highest possible standards of public health competence and practice - as set by FPH. With nearly 4,000 members based in the UK and internationally, we work to develop knowledge and understanding and to promote excellence in the field of public health. FPH has been at the forefront of developing and expanding the public health workforce and profession for over forty years. <http://www.fph.org.uk>

The **Care and Public Health Research Institute (CAPHRI)** is one of Maastricht University's largest research institutes, with a focus on Healthcare Innovation and Public Health Research. Our goal is simple. We aim to improve people's health by performing the highest quality, multidisciplinary research across the complete healthcare chain, ranging from prevention and primary care to aftercare and rehabilitation. CAPHRI has attracted the top scientists from around the world to contribute to this mission. <http://www.caphri.nl>

The **Association of Italian Chiropractors (AIC)** – chiropractic is a primary health care profession concerned with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of neuromusculoskeletal (NMSK) disorders and their effects on general health. A central chiropractic paradigm of health focuses on attaining optimum brain and nervous system function naturally through manual procedures, specific chiropractic adjusting procedures, physical modalities, lifestyle counselling, movement and nutritional advice, and public health initiatives, without the use of pharmaceuticals or surgery. <http://www.chiopratica.it>
