



European Internal Security Strategy

Public Consultation
March 2025



Table of contents

1. Summary	1
2. Security, public health and peace intersections	2
3. Addressing misinformation and toxic narratives	2
4. Strengthening cross-sector collaboration.....	3
5. Enhancing preparedness and resilience	3
6. Data-driven decision making.....	4
7. Community engagement and inclusive security.....	4

1. Summary

Founded in 1992, the **European Public Health Association (EUPHA)** is a leading umbrella organization connecting researchers, policymakers, and public health professionals across Europe. Operating in 53 WHO European Region countries, including all 27 EU Member States, EUPHA has 87 member organizations, organizes the **European Public Health Conference** (2,000+ professionals), coordinates the **European Public Health Week**, and publishes the **European Journal of Public Health**, a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

EUPHA proudly partners with the **Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association (GLEPHA)**, which works at the **intersection of policing, justice, and public health**. GLEPHA advocates for integrated, cross-sector security approaches, emphasizing **prevention-focused strategies, data-driven decision-making, and community-centered resilience**.

EUPHA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the **European Internal Security Strategy**, emphasizing that **peace, ethics, and equity must form the foundation of security and public health**. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in preparedness, demonstrating the risks of neglecting public health as a security issue. Climate change, misinformation, and socio-economic inequalities further amplify security threats. **A truly deterrent Europe must integrate public health into security planning, ensuring that policies are evidence-based, ethically grounded, and designed to protect not just borders, but people and communities.**

Key recommendations

- **Embed public health as a core pillar of the EU Internal Security Strategy**, ensuring that security policies are equity-driven, climate-conscious, and grounded in social justice.
- **Recognize climate security and biodiversity protection as a security priority.**
- **Strengthen the public health workforce** as a pillar of crisis response and resilience.
- **Develop EU-wide cross-sector frameworks** to facilitate joint health-security crisis responses within existing legal mandates
- **Support, fund and develop EU-backed, citizen-led local resilience hubs** where citizens, public health, and security forces collaborate on crisis readiness and local, regional and cross-border levels.
- **Reduce security vulnerabilities by addressing public health inequities and socio-economic disparities**, ensuring that all communities have equitable access to healthcare, crisis preparedness, and social protection
- **Develop integrated training programs for law enforcement and public health practitioners** to enhance mutual understanding
- **Enforce regulations on digital platforms** to stop the spread of mis/disinformation, ensuring **transparency in algorithms** and supporting **evidence-based** public health communication.

2. Security, public health and peace intersections

Security, public health, and peace are deeply interconnected. A strong public health system promotes stability and prevents conflict, while insecurity and inequities undermine health. The EU's *Internal Security Strategy* must adopt a *Health in All Policies* approach and recognize *One Health* as key to addressing shared threats, from climate change to antimicrobial resistance. Protecting biodiversity, preventing environmental degradation, and integrating public health into EU security planning—through the *Strategic Compass*, *EU Civil Protection Mechanism*, and *DG HERA*—are essential to reducing zoonotic risks and ensuring long-term resilience.

We urge the Commission to:

- ★ Systematically integrate **public health into EU security policies** to enhance resilience and social cohesion.
- ★ Incorporate **social determinants of security**, including health inequities, mental health, and substance misuse, into internal security planning.
- ★ Recognize **biodiversity protection as a security priority**, preventing habitat destruction that drives zoonotic disease spillovers.
- ★ Ensure security strategies are **people-centered, equity-driven, and aligned with One Health principles**.

3. Addressing misinformation and toxic narratives

Disinformation campaigns and toxic narratives undermine democratic institutions, trust in science, and social cohesion, increasing security vulnerabilities.

We urge the Commission to:

- ★ Strengthen EU-wide public health communication strategies to combat misinformation.
- ★ Promote **digital literacy and fact-based education** by integrating media literacy into national education curricula, adult learning programs, and community initiatives.
- ★ **Enforce regulations on digital platforms by mandating algorithmic transparency**, holding them accountable for amplifying false public health claims through sanctions, and establishing an EU rapid response mechanism for coordinated fact-checking and crisis alerts.
- ★ **Recognize the role of community resilience and social cohesion** in reducing vulnerability to disinformation.

4. Strengthening cross-sector collaboration

Security and health professionals must work together to anticipate and address security threats. Improved cooperation between sectors will enhance preparedness and response capacity.

We urge the Commission to:

- ★ Develop **integrated training programs for law enforcement and public health** practitioners to enhance mutual understanding.
- ★ Enhance **structured cooperation between public health and security agencies** through **existing EU mechanisms**, such as the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and Europol, to strengthen crisis preparedness.
- ★ Integrate public health intelligence into **Europol** and **Frontex** operations to strengthen risk assessments.

5. Enhancing preparedness and resilience

The pandemic exposed gaps in crisis preparedness, highlighting the need for a more resilient security framework.

We urge the Commission to:

- ★ **Establish a joint EU Health and Security Emergency Response Mechanism** to coordinate rapid deployment of public health workforce, logistical, and security resources during crises, ensuring a unified approach to health-related security threats.
- ★ **Expand the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)** to include collaboration with security agencies on risk analysis, countering biotreats, and misinformation response.
- ★ **Recognize mental health, non-communicable diseases and substance misuse as security concerns** and integrate harm reduction approaches into security responses.

6. Data-driven decision making

Effective security policies must be based on robust evidence and real-time data collection.

We urge the Commission to:

- ★ Leverage existing EU public health data infrastructures, including the European Health Data Space (EHDS) and ECDC surveillance systems, to ensure real-time, evidence-based security risk assessments **while integrating ethical safeguards, data protection, and responsible AI use.**
- ★ Enhance **ethically responsible information-sharing mechanisms** between public health, security, and intelligence agencies, ensuring transparency, proportionality, and adherence to fundamental rights.
- ★ Utilize **epidemiological approaches** to analyze crime and security trends through systematic data collection.
- ★ **Standardize key health security indicators across Member States** to improve the monitoring of vulnerabilities and guide policy interventions for resilience-building.

7. Community engagement and inclusive security

A sustainable security strategy must prioritize community engagement, ensuring that vulnerable populations are protected and included in policy discussions.

We urge the Commission to:

- ★ **Strengthen and fund EU-backed, citizen-led Civil Resilience Brigades** to empower communities in crisis preparedness, collaboration with public health, emergency services, and security forces, and trust-building.
- ★ **Establish a dedicated EU funding stream for grassroots public health-security initiatives**, empowering communities to develop bottom-up local, regional and cross-border levels, solutions for crisis preparedness and response.
- ★ **Address gender-sensitive security policies and child protection mechanisms** to safeguard vulnerable groups.
- ★ **Reduce security vulnerabilities by addressing public health inequities and socio-economic disparities**, ensuring that all communities have equitable access to healthcare, crisis preparedness, and social protection.