



## **Statement by the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) on COVID-19**

*26 February 2020*

In February 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) placed Disease X on the list of priority diseases in its research and development blueprint for action to prevent epidemics. According to the WHO, Disease X represents “the knowledge that a serious international epidemic could be caused by a pathogen currently unknown to cause human disease”. Exactly two years later, public health agencies and their partners around the world are preparing against and responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, caused by a previously unknown virus which was first detected in China in December 2019. As of February 25<sup>th</sup> 2020, the virus has already infected at least 80,239 individuals of which at least 279 (including 7 deaths) in Europe. As the umbrella organisation for public health associations in the European region, EUPHA stands with its members and colleagues in each country who are working tirelessly to detect and manage cases, identify contacts and prepare health services for worst-case scenarios. At a time where sustained transmission in places outside of China, including in some European countries, is looking increasingly likely, preparedness and surveillance remain critical. EUPHA is particularly watching the evolving situation in Italy, recognising that similar situations are likely to occur in other countries in the region.

Our understanding of the virus and its spread is changing every day, and critical information that impacts on how the outbreak can be managed is emerging every day. As such it remains essential that public health professionals and others involved in the management of the outbreak keep themselves up to date with the latest evidence to ensure evidence-based actions of maximum effectiveness. At the same time, the volume of information available can be overwhelming and misinformation, deliberate or not, can cause confusion. It is important therefore to obtain information from trustworthy sources. Regional and global public agencies, as well as scientific publishers have made key publications, data and guidelines freely available through regularly update portal and EUPHA recommends its members to regularly look for updates through the following sources:

For the latest global data, evidence and guidance:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

For EU specific guidance, surveillance updates and risk assessments:

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>

In addition, many scientific publishers are expediting the publication of COVID-19 related evidence and making it available free of charge. Examples include:

- The New England Journal of Medicine – <https://www.nejm.org/coronavirus>
- The Lancet – <https://www.thelancet.com/coronavirus>
- Eurosurveillance – <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/2019-ncov>
- Cambridge University Press – <https://www.cambridge.org/core/news/free-access-to-coronavirus-research>
- Elsevier – <https://www.elsevier.com/connect/coronavirus-information-center>
- Springer – <https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/campaigns/coronavirus>

You can also follow the outbreak and receive key new information through the EUPHA Infectious Diseases Control section Twitter account: [@euphaidc](https://twitter.com/euphaidc).

EUPHA stands with its members through these challenging times and will continue to actively monitor the situation in order to offer the most appropriate support it can to all those currently involved in fighting this threat.



For more information, please contact Dr Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, EUPHA president, [president@eupha.org](mailto:president@eupha.org), or Dr Michael Edelstein, president of EUPHA Infectious diseases control section, [office@eupha.org](mailto:office@eupha.org).

The European Public Health Association, or EUPHA in short, is an umbrella organisation for public health associations in Europe. Our network of national associations of public health represents around 20'000 public health professionals. Our 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 contributes to the preservation and improvement of public health in the European region through capacity and knowledge building. We are committed to creating a more inclusive Europe, narrowing all health inequalities among Europeans, by facilitating, activating, and disseminating strong evidence-based voices from the public health community and by strengthening the capacity of public health professionals to achieve evidence-based change.

**EUPHA** - European Public Health Association

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This statement received co-funding under an operating grant from the European Union's Health Programme (2014-2020).