



Press release

For immediate release 15 October 2015

EUPHA calls for European leadership on the refugee crisis

The refugee crisis facing Europe has shaken European institutions to their core. Countries whose people were tearing down the fences that divided Europe are rebuilding them. The Schengen Agreement is only just surviving. Politicians refer to the tide of refugees as an invasion, threatening social, political, and religious identity. Yet in many countries, ordinary people, shocked by the sight of children lying dead on beaches, are reaching out to these refugees, offering them food, shelter, and above all hope, giving Europe a new word, *Willkommenkultur*. A few, and only a few, governments have shown solidarity with both the refugees and those countries who have been in the front line of this massive movement of people.

We, on behalf of Europe's public health community, call on our political leaders to act decisively to address the public health challenges, including damage to mental health, trauma, access to essential health care, gender based violence (including rape and reproductive health issues) and others that may arise from the massive movement of these refugees, in a way that is equitable, humane, and consistent with deep seated European values. EUPHA stands ready to offer technical support in developing these responses. We further call on our political leaders to set aside their narrow national preoccupations for the common good, to share the load, recognising that the refugees arriving now will pay back their hospitality many times over in the years to come. If our political leaders fail to show the leadership they sought when they stood for election, future generations will not forgive them.

- END -

About EUPHA

EUPHA is an international independent umbrella organization for public health and health care associations and institutes in Europe. As the largest European scientific based network of public health professionals, EUPHA encourages a multidisciplinary, evidence-based health in all policies approach. EUPHA joins forces in order to be a collective European-wide voice advocating improvement of the publics' health and health services.

About EPH Conference

The EPH Conference is an initiative of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and aims to contribute to the improvement of public health in Europe by offering the means to exchange information and a platform for debate to researchers, policymakers, practitioners, young



professionals and students in the field of public health, health services research and public health training and education.

For more information please contact:

EUPHA

Prof Martin McKee, Floris Barnhoorn

Tel +31 6 5203 1371

E-mail: office@eupha.org

P.O. Box 1568, 3500 BN Utrecht, The Netherlands

www.eupha.org

@EPHConference, @EUPHActs

#ephmilan