



European Public Health Conference

Vision and Strategy 2021-2025

Introduction

Since 1992, the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) has organized EUPHA conferences annually. In 2012, the EPH Conference Foundation was established to organise the European Public Health Conferences. The EPH Conference is the biggest annual public health event in Europe bringing together research, practice, policy and education.

The EPH Conference Foundation aims to contribute to the upholding and improvement of public health in the European region through capacity building, knowledge acquisition and transfer and strives to achieve this object through, inter alia, holding scientific conferences on public health in Europe at regular intervals at the initiative of EUPHA.

The need for EPH Conferences

When looking at attendance over the past ten years, the continued interest and need for a real life conference where one can meet colleagues and learn from the latest research is clear. Attendance has increased from 900 in 2009 to 2,200 in 2019.

EPH Conferences general objectives are:

- To offer a platform for presenting research and debate policies for the public health network;
- To offer a place for meeting colleagues and networking;
- To facilitate the development of capacity for knowledge translation to support and change policies that impact on health;
- To support capacity building and collaborations that can achieve evidence-based public health action in practice; and
- To facilitate skills-building, enhanced capacity building, and enlarged networks.

EPH Conference's unique selling points are:

- Broad networking event;
- Based on scientific quality by selective procedure of abstracts;
- Focus on broad array of public health issues;
- Biggest annual public health event in Europe;
- Combining the exchange of knowledge with the building of capacity;
- Focus on the policy implications of research;

- Abstracts are published in a supplement of the peer-reviewed European Journal of Public Health;
- Provision of interactive skill-building seminars, and workshops aimed at developing the skills of public health professionals (i.e. capacity building and knowledge translation); and
- Major opportunity for students (385 delegates registered as students in 2019) to network and improve on their skills as young public health professionals.

The specific objectives of EPH Conferences are:

1. To exchange knowledge in public health in Europe and beyond

In the past decade most of the abstracts presented at EPH Conferences were on research and this will it is expected that the conference will maintain a strong research base, as this is the conference's unique strength. At the same time, the EPH Conference will develop more knowledge building in the areas of policy, practice and training/education. Policy issues are already well represented in plenary sessions and in workshops. Through skills-building workshops, this trend will be further developed. The policy impact of the conference has increased over the years. Since 2015, a press conference is part of the conference activities. The elaboration of a conference-linked Declaration both increased visibility as well as general support and unity within the public health community.

Practice and training/education abstracts are not very often part of the plenary or workshop programme and a further increase of these topics in the programme is therefore desirable.

Focus 2021-2025:

- Continue the policy character of the plenary sessions and workshops;
- Invite more top policymakers to be active in the programme;
- Continue with Press Conferences and Conference Declaration focusing on policy implications;
- Continue with the publication of an easy-to-read introductory magazine;
- To attract more practitioners, continue with offering credits for continual medical education;
- Continue with the different formats and scoring of practice abstracts;

2. To create opportunities for increased networking

The networking function of the EPH Conference is an important added value. In the past decade, several activities have been developed, including Join the Network meetings (EUPHA sections), country meetings (EUPHA national associations). The conference programme includes much appreciated extended lunch hours which give ample opportunity for networking and meeting colleagues and friends.

EPH Conference will continue to attract students and young professionals to attend the conference to network, build on their skills, and share their research by organising preferential rates and extra networking activities within the EUPHANxt network.

Focus 2021-2025:

- Continue to organise a 'live' conference where people meet face-to-face;
- Allow for physical space for people to meet (seating areas in different areas);
- Allow for extended time in the programme for people to meet (extended lunch hours, coffee breaks, reception, dinner);

- Organize Join the Network meetings by EUPHA sections, working groups and EUPHANxt;
- Facilitate Country meetings by EUPHA national associations;
- Facilitate networking possibilities and social opportunities for specific groups (project coordination, etc.);
- Organize Welcome Reception for as many delegates as possible (at no costs);
- Organize Conference Dinner & Dance (at low cost);
- Include networking possibilities within the Conference App;
- Organize extra networking activities within the EUPHANxt network.

3. To facilitate the development of capacity for knowledge translation, also beyond the conference

In recent years EPH Conference has put more emphasis on skills building workshops and pre-conferences. These sessions are usually well attended and highly appreciated. These sessions contribute to the capacity building and knowledge transition aim of the conference and are particularly of interest to young professionals.

An important reason for delegates to submit in the EPH Conference is the publication of abstracts in a supplement of the European Journal of Public Health, the leading journal for knowledge exchange and the evidence base for informed policy-making.

To facilitate continued medical education, EPH Conference offers European accreditation credits from the UEMS-EACCME. With EUPHA and Oxford University Press EPH Conference offers a free three-months subscription to the full European Journal of Public Health (EJPH) for all delegates. With the change to an open-access journal in 2022 this latter offer is likely to change.

In collaboration with EUPHA, the Fellowship Programme will be continued. The programme provides the opportunity for students and young professionals to attend the conference as 'Fellows' and work as a team to produce a daily journal for the EPH Conference App, and other posts on the social media platforms. With the aid of EUPHA fellows, Conference Track Reports will be made available for further reference beyond the conference. The same applies to making video recordings available of the plenary sessions available after the conference.

Focus 2021-2025:

- Continue to organise skills building workshops and pre conferences;
- Continue with the EJPH Abstract Supplement;
- Continue with offering European Accreditation for the conference (UEMS);
- Continue with the complimentary three-months access to the EJPH for all delegates at least until 2022 when EJPH moves into an open-access journal;
- Continue with the Abstract Mentor Programme aimed at students and young professionals, organised by EUPHANxt and EUPHA;
- With the EUPHA Fellows, continue with publishing Conference Track Reports after the conference;
- Posting of video recordings of plenary sessions on social media (YouTube).

4. To make the conference more environmentally sustainable

EPH Conference is committed to reducing the environmental impact of the conference and finding ways to be more environmentally responsible. In recent years, initiatives we have taken to help minimize the impact of the conference on the environment:

- Fresh vegetables and fruit are the basis of all meals. Our catering service gives priority to fresh fruits and vegetables that are locally produced and in season.
- We encourage the choice for vegetarian lunch and dinner options.
- We have chosen leaner meats and sea food, rather than beef.
- We do not offer alcohol at the conference and have limited the availability of drinks that are high in free sugars. Water is available throughout the conference.
- We have adopted environmentally friendly practices in communicating with delegates: communication with delegates is done electronically. Abstract submission, registration and invoicing are fully web-based. The printed Programme Book is only available on request, printed on FSC Mix paper.
- We encourage our delegates to travel by train or to reduce the effect of their air travel on the climate by flying CO2 neutral with the CO2ZERO compensation service.

Focus 2021-2025:

- Future conference venues and suppliers should preferably be ISO 20121 accredited. This standard addresses all stages of an events' supply chain, and includes monitoring and measuring guidelines.
- With EUPHA's Green Club and EUPHANxt we look for more measures to reduce the environmental impact of the conference. The ultimate aim is to be CO2 neutral.
- Initiatives/measures include: Food left-over, waste management, payment for printed materials.
- Link-up with like-minded conference organisers to set up a sustainability plan for European conferences.

5. To ensure independence and high scientific quality of the conference

EPH Conference is an independent foundation with a non-profit objective. Independence is maintained by the Code of Good EPH Conference Practice as the guiding principle in working with sponsors and industry. The high scientific quality and policy relevance is ensured by the International Scientific Committee with independent experts from numerous European countries scoring the abstracts (double anonymous). The conference is evaluated at various levels to hear feedback on the contents of the conference and helps us to improve on it.

Focus 2021-2025:

- Ensure the independence of the EPH Conference organisation by making use of The Code of Good EPH Conference Practice and the ethical committee;
- Ensure the scientific quality of the conference by continuing the scoring of abstracts by an independent International Scientific Committee;
- Evaluate on a yearly basis the contents of the conference;
- Continue with publishing Summary report and Participants' Evaluation report.

6. To ensure a professional and smooth organisation of the conference

Since 2013, the organisation of the EPH Conferences has been centralized at EUPHA office, under the supervision of the EPH Conference Executive Board. With the help of external staff and a local support committee, the conference is organised following a clearly prescribed format and structure.

The Conference Office team has worked together for over ten years ensuring continuity in the smooth organisation of the conferences from year to year.

The Conference Office has developed procedural guides and manuals to ensure the quality and organisation of the conference. Promotional materials have been standardized to create uniformity and continuity in our communication to delegates. Templates of reports are used to enable quick reporting after the conference.

Focus 2021-2025:

- Ensure a professional and smooth organisation of the conference;
- To provide a solid financial basis of the EPH Conference Foundation;
- Evaluate on a yearly basis the organisation of the conference;
- Adapt the EPH Conference Manual on a yearly basis.

7. To offer grants for specific target groups

Since EPH Conference Foundation has built up a substantial capital in recent years it is a good thing to create a (scholarship) fund to offer grants to colleagues from low resource countries. In recent years EPH Conference has provided about 35 waivers of registration fees to participants from specific countries/regions. The creation of a fund, together with EUPHA, will formalize the initiative and provides it with a long-term perspective.

Focus 2021-2025:

- With EUPHA, create a fund, managed by a separate foundation, offering grants to colleagues from low resource countries;
- Set up rules and procedure of granting in a transparent manner and evaluate and update these on a yearly basis.