



EUPHA strategy 2020-2025: Achieving a triple A rating for health in Europe

Analysis, Advocacy, Action

1. EUPHA 2020-2025: setting course in a changing world

The changing context

Europe enters the third decade of the 21st century with much to celebrate. Its population has never been healthier. Advances in knowledge, from basic sciences to public health, have transformed our ability to tackle the diseases that afflict our populations. It would be easy to become complacent. This would be a mistake. Despite the progress we have made, we are faced with massive and complex societal challenges that will place serious pressure on our public health and health care services. Our changing environments threaten life on earth, with global warming, loss of biodiversity, and depletion of natural resources. In the next decades, the ageing population will have a major impact, not only on health care, but on society as a whole. In addition, too many people have been left behind. We have made only limited progress in narrowing the deep inequalities that persist in our societies. People are on the move, fleeing environmental degradation, political oppression, conflict, and poverty, creating challenges for the societies from which they come and to which they go. Populist movements are increasing, challenging the very concept of the enlightenment and the scientific thought that has brought so much progress. And the world's wealth is being concentrated in the hands of an ever smaller elite. Our world is transforming rapidly and profoundly.

What does this mean for EUPHA?

EUPHA's unique position

The European Public Health Association, or EUPHA in short, is an umbrella organization for public health associations and institutes in Europe. Founded in 1992, EUPHA now has a unique position in the field of public health in Europe. With 86 members from 47 countries, it is the largest network of public health professionals, covering nearly all countries of Europe as defined by the WHO Regional Office for Europe. EUPHA's membership represents the broad public health community in Europe with its many different disciplines, and the organization can build on a large pool of active experts who are willing to share their knowledge in order to strengthen public health. In addition, EUPHA has developed a reputation for being a strong, independent and broad science-based network. We have an obligation to use this unique position to the fullest extent to support our members and the wider public health community in tackling all the intricate and disruptive current and future trends. The challenges we face may seem daunting, but if we are committed and join forces, we *can* prepare and find solutions. This third EUPHA strategy for the period 2020-2025 outlines how we intend to do this.

EUPHA's two-tier approach

The challenges we face are complex in nature, and require multidisciplinary and intersectoral action at all levels of society. This is the rationale for our **two-tier approach**. On the one hand, we will continue to support our members in providing high quality and efficient public health and health care in European countries, nationally, regionally, and in local communities. Together with our members, we will support the work of public health practitioners by providing evidence, practical tools, and opportunities to exchange experiences. At the same time, we will advocate for better health and greater use of evidence-informed health policy at the international level. At the heart of both of these components is a commitment to stimulate and facilitate mutual learning, with exchange of knowledge and experiences across national, disciplinary, and topic-based borders, and an explicit focus on reducing **health inequalities** within and between European countries.

EUPHA's voice

In the turbulent world in which we live it is too easy for the issues that impact on the health of our populations to be overlooked or ignored. Yet, when things go wrong, when conflicts arise, when outbreaks occur, or when living conditions deteriorate because of austerity policies, it is the health sector that must pick up the pieces. This cannot continue. EUPHA has a responsibility, as a leading voice of public health in Europe, to **keep health on the agenda**, advocating for better health as a value in itself, while at the same time highlighting the contribution of health to more resilient, more productive, and more cohesive societies, and building on the fact that healthy living conditions and access to affordable healthcare are basic human rights.

EUPHA is a science-based organization, recognized as an independent and trusted voice of and for public health. We will use our position to keep health in all policies and to strengthen public health policymaking and practice by drawing on the wealth of expertise among our members to **provide state-of-the-art evidence and knowledge**. This collective expertise is an enormous asset for our association and one that we must make use of. At the same time, we need to confront the changing approach of science in public debate, with the rapidly increasing availability and accessibility of digital information offering many benefits but also some serious threats. If we are to stay connected with society, EUPHA must speak the right language, making use of **compelling narratives** that address the concerns of ordinary people. We must find ways to communicate better in this changing world, with the risks of information overload and active promotion of disinformation.

EUPHA's scope

EUPHA is a European organization. This means that it must maintain its primary focus on Europe and must continue to invest in strong relationships with the European Commission, the European Parliament, WHO Regional Office for Europe, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and other European partners. Yet many of the challenges that we face are global and this means that we must work together with **global partners** to develop appropriate responses. And we must take a broad view not just geographically but also in the issues we engage with, recognizing how policies in other sectors can have profound consequences for health. This means that we need **broad alliances**, including not only the 'usual public health suspects', but also partners from other disciplines and sectors. EUPHA has already started to broaden its membership to reflect this and will continue to do so; EUPHA is an intrinsically collaborative organization. The United Nations **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) make the relationships between health and its wider determinants explicit and tangible, exemplified by the way that WHO places SDG3 on good health and well-being for all at the center of the framework (see figure). EUPHA sees that SDGs, to which all the world's governments have committed, as an important framework for our work going forward. We will hold governments to account for the progress they make to achieve the SDGs, and not only SDG3, with its focus on health, but the many others that are directly relevant to health. In this way, and in others, we will use the SDGs in our continued and strengthened role in advocacy for **All Policies for a Healthy Europe** (the Health in All Policies approach). Finally, the threats and opportunities for public health are constantly changing, with new issues reaching public and political

agendas and unexpected events occurring. EUPHA will maintain the **versatility** required, as we closely monitor the European public health landscape, ever ready to marshal the necessary evidence and engage in advocacy **rapidly** when a new issue emerges.



2. EUPHA 2020-2025: our vision and mission

Our vision

Our vision is to enable everyone in Europe to achieve the highest possible level of health by providing independent and authoritative analysis of the evidence, combined with targeted advocacy to achieve coordinated action by all key stakeholders. Our vision:

- Builds on the commitments of our governments and international agencies to achieve the health-related Sustainable Development Goals;
- Recognises the importance of placing Health in All Policies;
- Draws on the Vienna Declaration to embrace the entire range of health determinants, including the biological, social, environmental, occupational, behavioural, political, and commercial, the health care system, and everything that influences the health of our planet.

Our mission

1. To ensure that in all parts of Europe there is a strong evidence base, built on sustained investments in research capacity and data, as well as capacity for knowledge translation to support policies that impact on health;
 2. To identify, develop, and advocate for actionable policy recommendations in all sectors to improve health;
- and

3. To support capacity-building and collaborations that can achieve public health action in practice.

4. EUPHA's triple A approach

To achieve the goals as outlined above, EUPHA will apply a triple A approach. The three A's stand for Analysis, Advocacy and Action – the three main focal points of our work.

The three A's are closely interconnected, with a circular relationship in which analysis supports advocacy, which supports action. From action comes new analysis, and then new forms of advocacy and updated actions, and so on. Our two-tier approach will be used with all three A's, as EUPHA analyses, advocates, and acts at an international level while supporting its members as they do the same at national, regional, and local levels.

These three elements are underpinned by EUPHA's two basic values, Voicing Knowledge and Enhancing Capacity (see figure). Through capacity building, we will prepare future and current generations of engaged and connected public health professionals for their leadership role in public health, and we will contribute to tackling health inequalities within and between European countries. By voicing knowledge, we will support evidence-informed practice and policy decisions for public health and health services.

We now set out a concise description of each of the three A's: what does it mean in the EUPHA context, with which partners will we collaborate, and which tools will we use? A more detailed course of action based on the three A's will be elaborated in EUPHA's five year working plan for 2020-2025.

Analysis

What does Analysis mean for EUPHA?

Historically, as a science-based organization, EUPHA has always had a strong focus on analysis. Hence, we can build on long experience, exceptional expertise among our members, and the entire range of methods (quantitative, qualitative and mixed) and instruments used in multi-disciplinary public health. Analysis provides a solid base for evidence-informed, actionable policy-making and efficient actions. EUPHA's analysis is independent, transparent, and trustworthy, and includes:

- A broad definition of health, looking beyond the traditional measures such as mortality and morbidity, to include disabilities, health-related quality of life and well-being;

- The entire range of health determinants, including the biological, social, environmental, occupational, behavioural, political, and commercial, the health care system, and everything that influences the health of our planet (as set out in the Vienna Declaration);
- The distribution of health within and between populations, by the full range of human characteristics including gender, sexuality, race, nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic position, age, migrant status, and others, highlighting our commitment to reducing all types of health inequalities;
- A life course approach, taking into account the specificities of health in the various phases of life and their interdependencies, from measures to give every child a good start in life through to healthy and active ageing and a peaceful death;
- Looking at public health issues from all the relevant perspectives, including legal and ethical aspects;
- Use of foresight and scenario exercises to help us anticipate future developments;
- A commitment to supporting the translation of evidence into policy and getting evidence into practice, ensuring that it is timely, appropriate, and communicated effectively to those who need it; and
- Identifying and promoting action on gaps in data and information, which create avoidable barriers to fully understanding the health of our populations.

Who are our partners?

Our partners for stronger analysis are:

- Our institutional members;
- The research community;
- Our sections;
- EUPHANxt;
- European Commission (DG Sante, DG Research, EUROSTAT and other Directorates and specialized agencies);
- WHO Regional Office for Europe;
- National and European research academies;
- European partners, working on public health research; and
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Which tools will we use?

- The European Public Health Conferences to exchange, develop, and disseminate state of the art research in public health in Europe;
- Skills-building in public health and health services research, including knowledge translation;
- The European Journal of Public Health, including e-collections, theme-specific supplements, editorials and European public health news;
- Factsheets;
- Organising seminars and webinars;
- Being represented in key expert meetings and advisory bodies at European level; and
- EUPHA newsletter.

Advocacy

What does Advocacy mean for EUPHA?

If we are to place our analysis on European, national, and subnational political agendas, we will have to boost our advocacy efforts. EUPHA has an important role in countering disinformation and misinformation. It is therefore essential that the analysis can be presented to policy-makers and politicians in a timely and attractive manner. Above all, we must keep health on the agenda, not only in relation to health policy, but in all policies, recognizing the intersectoral nature of health. To do

this, we must provide leadership for the public health community, based on a strong common voice. Our advocacy includes:

- Monitoring the policy process and, as far as possible, anticipating it, so that we can pro-actively offer relevant, timely, and state-of-the-art evidence to policy-makers and politicians faced with major decisions;
- Pro-actively informing policy agendas by identifying new topics that require (intensified) attention, gathering evidence and undertaking foresight and scenario exercises;
- Finding effective means to shape the public health narrative, with stories that are compelling and reach politicians, policy-makers, and the general public;
- Skills-building in communication with policy-makers and politicians; and
- Being deliberately collaborative to achieve our objectives.

Who are our partners?

For advocacy our most important partners are:

- Our members;
- Our European partners working on public health. This specifically includes the EU4Health network;
- Our European partners whose work is related to public health;
- The research community;
- WHO Regional Office for Europe;
- European and national partners touching public health (e.g. architects, urban planners);
- Members of the European Parliament, members of national parliaments, policy-makers and politicians;
- EUPHANxt;
- Our sections;
- EUPHA ambassadors (sections presidents and Executive Council members, pillar advisors, Governing Board members); and
- EUPHA Rapid Response Team.

Which tools will we use?

- Press releases and statements;
- Editorials, E-collections and European public health news in the European Journal of Public Health;
- Public consultations;
- Policy meetings;
- EUPHA newsletter;
- Infographics;
- Dialogue and presentations with the European Commission, WHO Euro, ECDC and European Parliament;
- Collaboration with National Public Health Associations, taking particular advantage of EU presidencies;
- (Plenary sessions at) the EPH Conference;
- The EU Health Policy Platform;
- Brussels Office;
- The Voice of EUPHA; and
- A regularly updated communication and marketing strategy.

Action

What does Action mean for EUPHA?

Action is the newest of the three components of our strategy and the one where we have most to do to find our niche. How can we – through our members and partners– support public health and health professionals ‘on the ground’? How can we connect better with our members (and through them, with their members)? We can only succeed in partnership, catalyzing actions by those who are able to implement healthy public policies. We will lead by example, developing actionable policy recommendations in collaboration with our partners at a European level, while supporting our national members as they plan public health action, assisting with applying an integrated and cross-sectional approach, skills-building, implementation science, and policy engagement.

Who are our partners?

For this focal point, important partners are:

- Our members;
- Public health practitioners;
- Healthcare workers and their associations;
- Our European partners, working on public health action, including WHO Regional Office for Europe;
- Our European and national partners, working in disciplines which are related to yet relevant for public health (e.g. architects, urban planners);
- Public health authorities;
- EUPHANxt; and
- Our sections.

Which tools will we use?

- European Public Health Week, celebrating healthy populations;
- Support for regional initiatives (e.g. Visegrad 4 conference, where national associations are joining forces);
- Initiating and support for twinning initiatives between national public health associations;
- Offer facilities for national meetings at the European Public Health Conference;
- Facilitate and develop tools for exchanging good practices, such as workshops and a ‘virtual market place’ for members; and
- Develop multifunctional serious gaming initiatives to be used by National Public Health Associations and practitioners in the field to build and further develop existing public health skills.

The EUPHA strategy 2020-2025

Ensuring a strong evidence base to identify, develop and advocate for actionable policy recommendations to improve health and support a deliberate collaboration with a wide range of partners to achieve effective public health action.