

# European Public Health Association



## President's column

As announced at the EUPHA 2006 conference in Montreux and in the report of the EUPHA business meeting held there, the priority for the current presidency is to move rapidly forward on the reform of EUPHA structures.

The two most recent major changes to our functioning were the arrival of Dr Dineke Zeegers as General Manager in 1997 and the 'retirement' of Prof. Jouke van der Zee as Secretary of the executive council in 2003. The first was greeted with a great sigh of relief, the second with considerable apprehension. The relief at the arrival of Dineke Zeegers has been amply confirmed by her extraordinary competency in handling any- and everything that comes across her desk. As to the apprehension about the departure from the executive council of Jouke van der Zee, this was quickly dissipated. As all good leaders, Jouke took care to ensure a smooth transition by helping us find in Dr Diana Delnoij an able replacement who provides constant support and expert advice to our General Manager.

But the challenges facing EUPHA are growing constantly and we must now find ways and means to enhance our efficiency in functioning if we are to successfully meet those challenges.

One of the weaknesses of our structure is the coupling of the EUPHA presidency to the organization of the annual conference. This is clearly inefficient. The qualities and requirements needed to lead and coordinate the organization of a large international meeting are not necessarily the same as those needed for exercising our role as a major public health advocate in Europe. During the year leading up to the conference the future president's must concentrate on the conference, and immediately following that, all she/he wants to do is take a vacation. This is obviously an exaggeration. But to be able to rise to the current challenges and fulfil our mission as an 'independent scientific and professional voice for public health in Europe', we now require a stronger and more stable presidency.

Recognizing the challenges of the present hour, and the structural conditions necessary to meet those challenges, the Council of the past presidents, under the able chairmanship of Prof. Walter Ricciardi has devoted much time, effort and reflection to proposing a reformulation of our structures, a reformulation which will subsequently be reflected in our fundamental documents: our constitution

and by-laws. Successive drafts of the document, describing the proposed structure, have been discussed throughout the past year and were presented at the annual business meeting of EUPHA in Montreux in November. At that time, the governing council of EUPHA acknowledged with gratitude and satisfaction the efforts of the past presidents, encouraged them to continue refining the concepts and documents and asked that a broad consultation be set in motion to ensure that all voices were heard in the process, with the hopes of enlisting large support for the proposed changes.

National societies are the bedrock foundation on which EUPHA rests; the sections are the pillars that sustain its activities. While conserving and consolidating those vital structural elements, we need to increase the effectiveness of the executive organs of the Association, namely, by reinforcing and enhancing the position of our permanent staff, the executive council and the presidency. The proposals under discussion aim to achieve those objectives. Yet we will need more than a well-worded proposals, constitutions and by-laws. We need the identification of all of our members with the mission and purpose of EUPHA.

To foster the latter, I encourage all of us to study the draft prepared by the council of past presidents and to submit proposals to the EUPHA office, as soon as possible, but at the latest by mid-May, so that they can be considered at the meeting of the executive council in June in Helsinki and be ready for final discussion and approval at the governing council in October.

You can help make this year a milestone on the road to increased effectiveness and efficiency of EUPHA by participating in the reform of EUPHA structures. Thank you.

*Prof. John-Paul Vader*  
EUPHA President

## News from EUPHA office

EUPHA has been involved in a number of European projects, which are funded by the European Commission. In 2007, the following projects require our active input:

### *SPHERE project*

SPHERE (Strengthening Public Health Research in Europe) is a 'Specific

Support Action' funded by the European Commission Directorate for Research. The project was initiated by the former president of the EUPHA section on Public Health Practice and Policy, Prof. Mark McCarthy. The aims of the project are to describe public health research at European level, including support by national governments, and advise how it can be strengthened and most effectively integrated with European health policy. The SPHERE project is in its last year. Preliminary results were presented at the Montreux conference and this year, the final results will be presented at the Helsinki conference.

### *ASPHER/EUPHA accreditation project*

This project initiated by our partner association—ASPHER—aims to examine whether an independent European accreditation agency for public health training programmes can be established. The project is funded by the Leonardo programme of the European Commission. The project is half-way at the moment. In 2007, the project will further elaborate standards for the accreditation of public health training programmes.

### *European health policy and future of public health in the Unified Europe*

This conference proposal is set up by STAKES and concerns co-financing for the 2007 EUPHA conference.

### *Monitoring the health status of migrants within Europe: development of indicators*

The initiator of this project is the Department of Health Policy and Management of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. The project has started the beginning of 2007 and will continue for 3 years. EUPHA activities will include dissemination of the progress and results, using written and oral tools.

### *Mapping professional home care in Europe: EURHOMAP*

This project is initiated by NIVEL, the Netherlands Institute of Health Services Research. The project will start this year and aims to describe variations and

models of provision and good practice in professional home care in 30 European countries. The project will be implemented by a partnership covering experts from nine countries and including three international organizations.

Don't forget to regularly check the EUPHA website—[www.eupha.org](http://www.eupha.org)—for updates on our activities.

*Dineke Zeegers Paget*  
EUPHA Manager

## Update on the 2007 EUPHA conference

The 2007 EUPHA conference is organized by the Society for Social Medicine in the Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, Finland. The main theme is 'Future of Public Health in the Unified Europe'. The dates are 11–13 October 2007. More information on the conference can be found on the regularly updated EUPHA website: [www.eupha.org](http://www.eupha.org).

Please note that the abstract submission is now open. Abstracts can only be submitted through the online submission system at [www.eupha.org](http://www.eupha.org). The deadline for the submission of abstracts is:

### 1 MAY 2007

Abstracts can be submitted for single presentations (both oral and poster) and for workshops/seminars. Please read the instructions for submission carefully before submitting.

*Ilmo Keskimäki*  
EUPHA President-elect

## News from the EUPHA section on Chronic Diseases

*Iveta Nagyova*<sup>1,2</sup>,  
*Jitse P. van Dijk*<sup>3</sup>

The EUPHA section on Chronic Diseases is a newly established section approved by the EUPHA Governing Council on its meeting on November 16, 2006 in Montreux, Switzerland. The increase of chronic diseases and chronic conditions due to demographic transitions, such as increasing life expectancies and ageing populations represent an imperative that

cannot be ignored and bring about a number of major challenges for health and social policy planners. During the EUPHA 2006 annual meeting an independent track dealing with chronic diseases and their consequences was held. In addition to oral presentations in six tracks sixteen poster presentations were devoted to subjects associated with chronic diseases, disability and care for the elderly. The tracks and posters addressed topical issues in this field calling for a broad model of public health to guide comprehensive public health action. The main common underlying themes discussed within the sessions were: (i) the necessity to shift from 'disease care' system towards 'health-focused' research and practice, and (ii) the shift from the risk factor-based paradigm to the identification of common pathways to health for people in their communities and in the full context of their lives. Discussions emphasized the raising awareness of those pathways to health that have the potential to initiate useful strategies for community interventions and could contribute to sustainable improvements in health. The burden of chronic disease plays an increasingly important role and it will be a major goal of health policy worldwide to ensure that longer life is accompanied by greater health and less disability.

*Iveta Rajnicova-Nagyova*  
President of the EUPHA section on Chronic Diseases

## News from the EUPHA section on Infectious Diseases Control—looking forward to the next three years

The EUPHA Infectious Diseases Control (IDC) section celebrated its third birthday at the 2006 Conference in Montreux. The section has grown rapidly since it was formed in Rome in 2003, and now has about 365 members. We hope to continue growing by strengthening our membership base across the whole of Europe, and we are particularly keen to hear from members who would like to contribute actively to our work.

At the 2006 annual general meeting in Montreux, Viviane Van Casteren, the section's founding president, reminded members of what had already been achieved. As well as actively participating in the EUPHA conferences, many members have been invited to contribute to the work of the ECDC since its foundation in 2005, with a section member representing EUPHA on the ECDC Advisory Forum. Viviane then thanked

Jelle Doosje and Marielle Jambroes for running the IDC secretariat, which had been so important in developing the section. They have now handed over to Marja Esveld and Dieuwke Vos, and the function will continue to be supported though funding generously provided by the National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) of the Netherlands.

Viviane was congratulated on establishing and nurturing the section since its foundation. She then introduced the new president, Ruth Gelletlie. Ruth set out her proposal to attract new members by developing the section website and promised that, with the support of the active members, she would draw up a work-plan to take forward the section's objectives. This work-plan will be based upon the new mission statement, which was discussed and adopted during the meeting.

For further information please contact: [dieuwke.vos@rivm.nl](mailto:dieuwke.vos@rivm.nl)

*Ruth Gelletlie*  
President of the EUPHA Section on Infectious Diseases Control

## News from the EUPHA section on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion

This new section was established on 16th of November 2007. It already had 60 members on its mailing list. The section arranged two workshops and a section meeting during the conference in Montreux.

A workshop on elderly safety was arranged together with the section on Public health policy and practice. Five speakers from all over Europe showed many promising interventions on reducing the amount of elderly injuries. An European network for Safety among Elderly (EUNESE) is established ([www.eunese.org](http://www.eunese.org)). Another EU-project, ProFaNE, Prevention of Falls Network Europe has developed practical, effective, evidence-based and multi-factorial programmes to reduce the incidence of falls and fractures amongst elderly people ([www.profane.eu.org](http://www.profane.eu.org)).

The other workshop discussed the social patterning of injury and its challenges for injury control and prevention. While most countries of western Europe have enjoyed a steady decline in childhood mortality from injuries over the last three decades, recent trends in the transition countries appear much less favourable and to a high-degree inconsistent. If mortality rates from injuries in the transition countries of central and eastern Europe were reduced to the

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average level of western Europe, the East-West gap in child health would decrease significantly, saving lives of tens of thousands of children every year.

The aim of the section is to enhance communication in injury and violence

prevention and safety promotion across Europe. During the section meeting, a co-operation with the section on Public mental health was announced with regard to arranging a pre-conference in Helsinki 2007 on

psychosocial aspects on injury and violence prevention.

*Johan Lund*

*President of the EUPHA Section on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion*



## WHO/EURO: THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK: ADDRESSING THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN YOUNG EUROPEANS

Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death in young people aged 5–24 years in the WHO European Region, with 30 000 deaths estimated to have occurred in 2002.<sup>1,2</sup> This constitutes a quarter of the total 127 000 road traffic injury deaths in the Region, with males accounting for 80% of these deaths.<sup>3</sup> Young people have increased exposure as pedestrians, cyclist, and motorbike riders and therefore make up a disproportionately large group of vulnerable road users. The burden is unequally distributed between and within countries, with a 6-fold difference in road traffic injury mortality rates in children aged 0–14 years in countries reporting the highest rates compared to those with the lowest.<sup>4</sup> Large inequalities also exist within countries, with children and young people from socially disadvantaged groups at much higher risk compared to the better off. The high number of years of life lost due to premature mortality in the young, coupled with the severe and life-long disability, results in a disproportionately higher burden of disease. This, accompanied by the devastating impact on the lives of victims and families and the loss in productivity, results in high societal costs; estimates suggest that road traffic injuries cost about 2% of gross domestic product.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, the potential for prevention is huge: estimates suggest that almost half the road traffic fatality could be averted if all countries in the Region were to have the same mortality rate as the country with the lowest.<sup>2</sup> And many cost-effective measures exist to achieve this as reported recently. For example, wearing

motorcycle helmets reduces the risk of severe injury by 72% and the likelihood of death by up to 39%.<sup>6</sup> Each Euro invested in car child restraints would save € 32.<sup>2</sup> However, more political priority is needed to ensure wider implementation of the evidence-based measures to address the leading risk factors of speed, drink-driving, road design, infrastructure and crash helmet, seat belt and child restraint use.<sup>7</sup>

The First United Nations Global Road Safety Week<sup>8</sup> will be celebrated on 23–29 April 2007 and offers a unique opportunity to advocate for such action, building on the global advocacy efforts started on World Health Day 2004.<sup>7,9</sup> This awareness-raising event will focus on the impact of road crashes on young people, and the evidence-based action needed by governments to support efforts by civil society. The Week is also an opportunity for young people to make their voices heard: the Youth Assembly (23–24 April, Geneva) will include an electronic consultation with young people from all over the world, to promote discussion and adoption of a road safety declaration for and by youth. In Europe, a key event taking place on the occasion of the Week will be the celebration by the European Commission of the First European Road Safety Day, on 27 April 2007 in Brussels (Belgium), focusing on young drivers.<sup>10</sup>

We warmly encourage broad participation in this historic public health event.

*Francesca Racioppi, Dinesh Sethi*  
*WHO Regional Office for Europe*

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