

## **Annual report 2021/22**

### **EUPHA section on Ethics in Public Health (EUPHA-ETH)**

#### **Goals for 2022/23**

1. Continue activities in collaboration with FPH, ASPHER and other partners
  - a. to build ethical competency and capacity of public health workforce, including collaboration in
    - i. delivery of International Conference on ethical preparedness, competence and resilience of public health workforce / education and training in public health ethics.
    - ii. Delivery of webinars and workshops
    - iii. Take forward recommendations of the report on variability in education and training in public health ethics
  - b. Development of Code of conduct and professional ethical public health practice
  - c. Promote moral courage and resilience in public health workforce
  - d. Take forward recommendations and issues raised in the report on moral distress and injury in public health workforce
  - e. Advance the work on public health values and implications for policy and practice
2. Continued collaboration with other EUPHA sections, FPH, ASPHER and other partners to advance the discourse, scholarship and practice in public health ethics
3. An increased visibility and participation in the 2023 EUPHA conference and World Congress of Public Health and other fora.
4. Continue to collaborate and support other EUPHA sections and other stakeholders to support their consideration of ethical issues in their activities

#### **Achievements in 2021/22**

1. The section has been active in a variety of activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - The president of the section was invited to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh symposium on Wednesday 14 April 2021: *The Public's Health after*

*Covid: science and social justice*. The title of the contribution was: *Covid-19: opportunities for public health ethics?*

Subsequently an article was published: Maeckelberghe, E. L. M. (2021) COVID-19: opportunities for public health ethics? *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*. doi: 10.4997/JRCPE.2021.241

- The section was also represented in the COVID-19 Response and Preparedness and Response Series - Webinar 1: TRIPS  
This was the first webinar organised by the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) in collaboration with the French Public Health Association (Société Française de Santé Publique) (SFSP), and with the support of EUPHA's Health Technology Assessment Section (EUPHA HTA), a series of events to raise awareness and to share the knowledge of experts on key aspects regarding: COVID-19 Preparedness and Response. The section's contribution was a talk about by its president: *TRIPS Waiver, Knowledge Transfer and Vaccine Distribution - Ethical reflection*. The webinar can be watched on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBUOEUvqLJA>
- The president of the section was also asked to write a contribution for the forthcoming EJPH supplement on the aftermath of Covid-19:  
Maeckelberghe ELM, (2021) Ethical Implications of Covid-19: Vulnerabilites in a Global Perspective. *Eur J Public Health*, suppl on the aftermath of Covid-19
- The section collaborated with Faculty of Public Health, ASPHER and others in development of ethical dimensions of various policies and statements related to the Covid Pandemic. This has included input to various working groups and production of variety of statements, guidelines and resources.

The "EUPHA Ethics in Public Health Section" has continued to collaborate with the UK Faculty of public health, ASPHER, law and public health section and other partners around a range of activities, for example:

- The Faculty of Public Health in collaboration with EUPHA ethics in public health and the public health and law sections, and other partners have been organising international webinar series on **public health ethics, law and human rights for the future of humanity**. There has been wide interest and support for the webinars with over 900 people registering for the first webinar and over 500 for all the subsequent webinars. This has included sessions on
  - **Justice, solidarity and public's health.**  
Recording: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9f5ZaMKP\\_w&t=4667s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9f5ZaMKP_w&t=4667s)
  - **Legal Epidemiology and the path to better health and policy**  
Recording available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x586L4uzJBo>
  - **Unleashing the power of law to promote better health for all**

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3VI78nFlil>

- **Climate change, public health and strategic Litigation on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021**, organised by the Faculty in collaboration with the Global Health Law Groningen Research Centre, EUPHA law, ethics and environment sections, Greenpeace, Client Earth with other partners. **Recording:** <https://youtu.be/18h8wOtpJZg>
- The Faculty working in collaboration with the “EUPHA Ethics in Public Health Section” and various ethico-legal academics, practitioners and researchers on education and training in public health ethics have highlighted the importance and relevance of the issue and that there is continuing demand and need to develop and support wider public health ethics and law (PHEL) capacity among the public health health workforce through the provision of PHEL education, training, guidance, and mentoring.

E.g. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31595298/>

In light of the evidence the “EUPHA Ethics in Public Health Section” in collaboration with FPH have been working to devise various strategies to address the issue:

- The Faculty in collaboration with ASPHER and EUPHA carried out survey of schools of public health and public health workforce in Europe and has established a joint working group on public health ethics and law.
  - It has published a report on **Variability in education and training in public health ethics in Europe**  
[https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3633/fph\\_ethics\\_report\\_08\\_22-1.pdf](https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3633/fph_ethics_report_08_22-1.pdf)
  - develop a joint high level policy paper on education and training in public health ethics and law
  - consider implications for public health curricula and develop a competency framework in public health ethics and law
- Code of ethics and professional conduct for public health – The WHO /ASPHER European competencies framework for public health workforce highlighted public health ethics and law as a core issue. Scotland has been highlighted as a pilot site to explore development of **code of professional conduct and ethical practice**. “EUPHA Ethics in Public Health Section” has been working with FPH and the Scottish public health ethics forum, consulting on the issue at its various public health ethics forum gatherings prior to the pandemic. There are plans to re-establish a working group to take forward the issue in 2022.
- The Faculty ethics committee is collaborating with researchers at LSE and University of Durham in a project on '[Paternalism, Health, and Public Policy](#)' funded by the Wellcome Trust. There was a two day on-line workshop on 'Paternalism and Public Health' held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021, including a round table on the Faculty report on '[The Nanny State Debate](#)'. <https://paternalismhealthpublicpolicy.org/workshop-1-paternalism-and-public-health/>

2. Accepted Section Submission for EPH conference 2022 have included:

- Round table: Is public health just science?
- Workshop: Commercial determinants and global capture of public health- cases spanning the world
- Workshop: Quality of COVID-19 science: meta-research and the ethical implications for public health
- The section continues to be concerned that there appears to be preference and focus on epidemiological and statistical based submissions and the need to also properly consider humanities and social sciences and ethical and legal submissions.

### **Collaboration with section members**

Section members were encouraged to collaborate submitting proposals for the EPH2022 conference and to communicate with help of the section among each other to initiate projects on public health ethics.

The section has a steering committee/core group who meets regularly.

The section has collaborated and supported initiatives and activities around public health ethics in various countries

### **Activities at the EPH Conference 2021**

In a collaborative effort with section members and partners, several proposals for workshops were submitted and have been accepted:

- Round table: COVID-19, ethics, and the many publics in public health policy and practice
- Workshop: Intersex human rights and wellbeing
- Workshop: Integrating the use of genomic data in personalised healthcare: implications across the board
- Workshop: Intersex human rights and wellbeing
- Workshop: Moral distress and moral injury in the public health community in times of COVID-19
- Round table: The Aftermath of COVID-19
- Workshop: The contribution of Environmental Impact Assessments to better health
- Round table: COVID-19 Digital Green Certificate: Hope for restoring freedom or simply opening Pandora's box?

### **Other activities**

The collaboration with the UK Public Health Faculty remains important for EUPHA-ETH. The vice-president, Farhang Tahzib ensures the continuity of this collaboration.

Some activities during the past year have included:

- UK FPH in collaboration with Ethics in Public Health Section and ASPHER carried out a survey of public health workforce and schools of public health in Europe. Due to be published September 2022.
- UK FPH and EUPHA ETH and Law and public health sections organized international webinar series on “Public Health Ethics, Law and Human rights for the future of humanity” covering various themes and issues. There has been widespread interest in the various webinars with over 900 people registering for the first webinar. The section is collaborating with the UK FPH and ASPHER in development of Code of professional conduct and ethical practice in Scotland and other pilot sites.
- The section is collaborating with the UK FPH in supporting educational and training initiatives in public health ethics and supporting young public health professionals

### **Annual meeting**

A virtual JTN meeting took place during the 2021 conference. Minutes are available online: [https://eupha.org/repository/sections/eph/JTN\\_ethics\\_2021\\_minutes\\_final.pdf](https://eupha.org/repository/sections/eph/JTN_ethics_2021_minutes_final.pdf) .

### **General communications with section members**

Section members received regular updates of activities via EUPHA-mailman.

*F. Tahzib and P. Schröder-Bäck, vice-presidents*

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*Slides from JTN Berlin 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

## Ethics for good public health practice and policy making

## EUPHA Ethics in Public Health Section Join the Network meeting



EUPHA Ethics in Public Health Section  
Join the Network Meeting  
Berlin, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022



- Welcome. Introduction. Purpose of meeting
- Activities report 2021 -2022
- Reflection, consultation and activities
- Preparing for EPH 2023
- Any other business
- Close

## EUPHA Ethics in Public Health Section

- **2340 members**
- The steering group:
  - Dr Els Maeckelberghe , University Medical Center Groningen;
  - Professor Peter Schröder-Bäck, University of Applied Sciences for Police and Public Administration in North Rhine -Westphalia, Campus, Germany
  - Dr Farhang Tahzib , Chair, Public Health Ethics committee, Faculty of Public Health, UK
  - Dr Ilaria Tocco Tussardi, University of Verona, Section of Hygiene and Preventive, Environmental and Occupational Medicine, Department of Diagnostics and Public Health, Italy
  - Prof Silviya Yankulovska , MU-Pleven, Faculty of Public Health, Bulgaria



The **professional discipline** of public health is **driven by its values**



“Values define us as a group of public health professionals, **values drew many of us into public health.**”

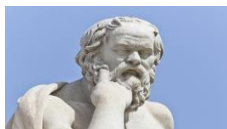
“Fundamental ethical and basic scientific **values support mission and purpose of the profession .**”

(Coughlin, S.S- Epidemiologic review, 2000, 22:1826)

- Ethics is recognised as **acore professional competence** for public health professionals
- This competence includes:
  - Ethical management of self, others, and resources
  - Knowledge of the principles of ethical and professional practice



## Moral failures of Public Health



Reflection, consultation and courageous action

“**There was a time** when public health in ..... was driven by passionately **articulated values** and compelling research, a time when **it's leaders were concerned** about social reform and political change. [...] Public health is the science of **social justice, overcoming the forces** that undermine the future security of **families, communities and peoples**. Public health leadership in ..... is failing. **It is time for those leaders to discover courage and purpose.**

Richard Horton, Lancet, 2011:1060

## Collaboration and support around various policy areas

- Ethics is a **cross cutting issues** and all policy areas have ethical dimensions
- The section President made **presentation on Covid-19: opportunities for public health ethics?** At symposium at Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh on *The Public's Health after Covid: science and social justice* .
- The section was represented in the **COVID-19 Response and Preparedness and Response** Series – eg Ethical reflections on *TRIPS Waiver, Knowledge Transfer and Vaccine Distribution*
- The section wrote a contribution for EJPH supplement on the aftermath of Covid-19 on **Ethical Implications of Covid-19: Vulnerabilities in a Global Perspective**.
- The Section **collaborated with EUPHA Law and Public Health section, Faculty of Public Health, University of Groningen and other partners** in a number of significant webinars on themes related public health for the future of humanity



FACULTY OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH



## Building ethical competence and capacity of public health workforce and systems



**Variability in education and training in public health ethics in Europe** [https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3633/fph\\_ethics\\_report\\_08\\_221.pdf](https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3633/fph_ethics_report_08_221.pdf)

### Key messages

- Ethics is an optional extra for some schools of public health
- There is an ethics training gap in continuing professional development
- Public health ethics education is a poorly defined field
- There is lack of expertise and support
- Public health professionals perceive they have a good understanding of, and response to ethical dilemmas in their professional lives

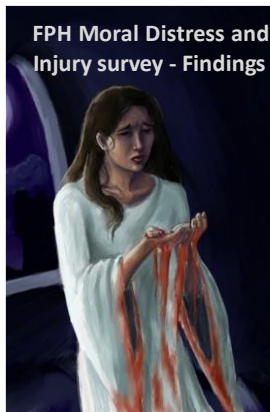
## Building ethical competence and capacity of public health workforce and systems



- Evidence of **inadequacies in education and training** in public health ethics
- Joint **EUPHA/ASPHER/FPH** group on education and training Public health ethics and law
- Advocacy around the importance and the need
- Development of **practical support and resources**

### Variability in education and training in public health ethics in Europe

[https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3633/fph\\_ethics\\_report\\_08\\_22\\_1.pdf](https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3633/fph_ethics_report_08_22_1.pdf)



#### Situations in which moral distress arises:

1. Developing/implementing national policy, guidance and law.
2. Giving public health advice.
3. Workplace relationships and environments.

#### Moral judgement that led to distress:

1. Causing injury to others.
  - a) Pursuit of public health goals at the expense of other goods.
  - b) Doing harm through blind obedience to guidance.
2. Inaction/inability to do good.
3. (Dis)honesty in public health messaging.
4. Unjust prioritisation decisions.
  - a) Advising without sufficient resources.

**47%** said they had to do something they thought was **morally wrong**...

**44%** said they did something they thought was **morally right**...

**30%** said they were **not sure** what the morally right thing to do was.

**33%** said their colleagues or organisation did something that they thought was morally wrong...

...and **experienced distress** because of it

#### Proposed ways to address moral distress:

1. Better decision making.
  - a) Better national policy and guidance.
  - b) Decentralisation of decision making.
  - c) Flexibility in national guidance
2. Communication and participation.
3. Practitioner moral development & support.
4. Pandemic planning, resourcing etc.
5. Freedom to voice concerns and conscientious objection.
6. Acceptance/no mitigation possible.



## Some activities for 2023

- Building **competence** and **capacity** for good public health practice, through education and training
- **Moral Distress and Injury** of public health workforce project
- **Code of Conduct and ethical professional practice**
- **Paternalism** and public health
- Ethical and legal dimensions of **Commercial determinants of health**
- Perspectives on **data sharing and security** from law enforcement and public health
- International conference on **ethical preparedness, competence and resilience for good public health practice, in line with the moral mandate of public health and implications for policy and practice** in the Spring





**Ethics for good public health practice and policy making**



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