

Annual report 2023

EUPHA section on Sexual and Gender Minority Health (EUPHA-SGMH)

This report shortly summarizes the section's previous and current aims and activities, and the planned activities for 2024.

Activities in 2023

- New Vice President and Steering Group Members

Late last year, the section appointed a new section vice president, Dr. Lovro Markovic. The section also welcomed three new members to the steering group; Dr. Corina Lelutiu-Weinberger (USA), Prof. Nigel Sherriff (UK), and Dr. Massimo Mirandola (Italy). Incumbent members include Dr. Igor Grabovac (Austria), Dr. Amets Suess Schwend (Spain), Dr. David Doyle (Netherlands/UK), Dr. Chris Noone (Ireland), Dr. Kristefer Stojanovski (USA), and Dr. Richard Bränström (Past President; Sweden).

- Section expansion and EUPHA-internal collaboration

The Section grew further, with 1326 members as of December 2023. Apart from expanding the network, collaborations with other sections were pursued, resulting in workshops at the upcoming EPH in Dublin (see below).

- European Public Health Week 2023

This year, EUPHA is organised the European Public Health Week (EUPHW) from May 22-26, with the aim of raising awareness on public health and promote collaboration among the public health community in Europe. The SGMH section was part of the kick-off event on Tuesday, May 23, with a series of experts presenting on the topic of diversity in health. Section VP Dr. Markovic held a short presentation entitled "Increasing the knowledge on and overcoming disparities in health and health care among LGBTQI+ populations". Read more about it [here](#).

- Statement on Uganda's Anti-LGBT Law 2023

2023 was a turbulent year concerning the legal situation of SGM persons in Europe and beyond. Earlier this year in April, Uganda issued a draconic law that criminalized same-sex conduct, with penalties ranging up to death. EUPHA joined position of the World Federation of Public Health Associations: [\(WFPHA\) statement](#), calling on the Ugandan President, Parliament and Government to foster an inclusive and safe environment for all citizens,

while safeguarding the human rights of each individual, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Statement on the EU LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy

To set concrete steps towards equity, the European Commission launched the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy (2021-2025). As part of the mid-term call for evidence in September 2023, an official position was submitted to the EC outlining the EUPHA-SGMH views on the initiative. You can read the statement [here](#).

Collaboration with section members

All section members are routinely invited for collaboration and input via the section newsletter. Examples include the Call for Abstracts for the EPH Conference, as well as call for involvement during the European Public Health Week in the February newsletter.

Goals for 2024

Goals for the upcoming year were discussed during the Join the Network meeting, and after consulting the Steering Council. We will focus on further networking with relevant NGOs at European level, as well as strengthening grassroots participation within the wider European public health community.

The main proposed idea from the Join the Network meeting was to organize a pre-conference in collaboration with local civil society and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), other relevant organizations, as well as SGM community members, as a means of more affordable conference participation, and to further foster collaboration with NGOs active in SGM health. The section will pursue these ideas for Lisbon 2024.

Activities at the EPH conference 2023 in Dublin

- 6.Q. - **Workshop: Anti-Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Stigma: How Prejudice Affects the Health of SGM Globally** (Fri 10 Nov, 11:40-12:40); EUPHA-SGMH, EUPHA-GH initiative
- JTN18 - Sexual gender and minority health - **Join the network** (Fri 10 Nov, 12:50-13:50), EUPHA-SGMH)
- 7.Q. - **Round table: Is public health possible when LGBTIQ+ individuals are criminalised? A roundtable and call to action** (Fri 10 Nov, 15:10-16:10), EUPHA-SGMH; EUPHA-LAW; EUPHA-ETH; EUPHA-GH; EUPHAnxt
- 10.O. - **Round table: Anti-gender movements and their implications for trans-specific healthcare for children in Europe** (Sat 11 Nov, 11:40-12:40), EUPHA-SGMH; EUPHA-CAPH; TGEU; ILGA-Europe; IGLYO; EPATH
- 11.P. - **Workshop: Inequities in physical and mental health, and health care utilization for LGBTQ groups across Europe** (Sat 11 Nov 14:00-15:00), EUPHA-SGMH

General communications with section members

In 2023, the SGMH section issued 4 newsletters and additional communication, through which section members were kept informed on ongoing activities of the Section, as well as recent relevant events pertaining to sexual and gender minority health. Input from our members is highly valued and routinely sought via the newsletter. News items were also routinely shared on X (formerly known as Twitter).

There was 1 meeting with the new Steering Group in early April 2023, where new members were welcomed and section-related duties at EPH Dublin 2023 were discussed.

International participation in events on behalf of EUPHA

In April 2023, VP Lovro Markovic attended the yearly Conference of the European Professional Organisation for Transgender Health (EPATH) in Killarney, Ireland. The goal was to solidify the partnership with organisations working in the area of transgender health: ILGA Europe, TGEU, EPATH itself, and various other professionals working in the field. The conference was an interdisciplinary success. Keynote presentations included an in-depth dive into the methodology and rigor behind the recently updated evidence-based guidelines Standards of Care (SOC) in their 8th version. A roundtable on gender-affirming care for children and adolescents amidst changing political climates was held, which inspired the upcoming roundtable organized by our section at the Dublin conference (see EPH Dublin activities above).

In May 2023, Section President Dr. Van der Star held a lecture entitled “LGBTIQ+ health inequity in a modern Europe: Expanding on and moving beyond existing stigma frameworks to advance research and policy” as part of the European Public Health Week, hosted by the Austrian National Public Health Institute (Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, GÖG). Read more about it [here](#).

In December 2023, Section President Dr. Van der Star held a talk entitled “Hostile Climates & LGBTQI+ Health Inequity” as part of a larger panel discussion named “Human Rights Violations and Structural Barriers to Mental Health and the Intersection With LGBTI Mental Health: Elevating Mental Healthcare for LGBTI People in Europe” hosted by the Anti-Discrimination Department at the Council of Europe.

Annual meeting

The minutes of Join-the-Network Meeting 2023 (Fri 10 November 2023, 12:50-13:50h, EPH Conference) are included with this annual report, on the next page.

Minutes Join-the-Network Meeting 2023

Date

November 10th, 2023, 12:50-13:50 Dublin Time

Place

European Public Health Conference 2023, Convention Centre Dublin, Ireland

Attendees

About 15 persons joined the meeting (note: the EPH app did not display the location until the day of the conference)

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Brief introduction to the section (Section aims and strategy)
3. Update on current activities
4. Future activities and planning (EPH Lisbon and Helsinki, other activities)
5. AOB and end of meeting

MINUTES

1. Introductions

Dr. Arjan Van der Star (President) opened the EUPHA-SGMH Join-the-Network (JtN) meeting. New Section Vice-President Dr. Lovro Markovic (Vice-President) introduced themselves. Steering Group members present included Dr. Corina Lelutiu-Weinberger (USA), Dr. Igor Grabovac (Austria), and Dr. Kristefer Stojanovski (USA).

2. Brief introduction to the section (Section aims and strategy)

Dr. Van der Star gave a brief overview of Section Aims and Strategy (e.g. increasing visibility and awareness of SGM health in the broader field of Public Health, increasing knowledge on SGM population differences, facilitating cross-European research in the field, as well as promoting measures that increase health and well-being of SGM individuals and populations).

3. Update on current activities

Dr. Van der Star gave a brief update of EUPHA-SGMH Section activities. The section grew to 1306 members as of October 2023), and had a very active and leading role in many events throughout the past year. These included:

- Continued collaboration with international partners: INIA, ILGA-Europe, TGEU, EPATH, IGLYO, ACCEPTESS-T

- International Women’s Day 2023: EUPHA Panel Discussion
- European Public Health Week 2023: EUPHA Kick-Off Panel Discussion
- European Public Health Week 2023: Public Lecture with GÖG Austria
- European Professional Organisation for Transgender Health (EPATH) Conference in Killarney, Ireland
- Joint Statement with the World Federation of Public Health Associations on the Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023
- Feedback to the Mid-Term Review of the European Commission’s LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025
- Four workshops and roundtables (co-)organised at EPH 2023:
 - “Anti-Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Stigma: How Prejudice Affects the Health of SGM Globally”
 - “Is public health possible when LGBTQI+ individuals are criminalised? A roundtable and call to action”
 - “Round Table: Anti-gender movements and their implications for trans-specific healthcare for children in Europe”
 - “Workshop: Inequities in physical and mental health, and health care utilization for LGBTQ groups across Europe”

4. Future activities and planning for EPH 2024 in Lisbon

An open-forum discussion was used to brainstorm ideas for future activities. Dr. Markovic kickstarted the discussion with a few points (community participation, resilience, involvement of civil society,

Topics that resonated and found support from Section Members included:

EPH Lisbon 2024

Pre-Conference that would include local civil society (NGOs), other relevant organizations, as well as SGM community members, as a means of more affordable conference participation, and to further foster collaboration with NGOs active in SGM health. Section Member Luis Roxo offered to help with organizing.

Potentially organizing a **satellite event** formally independent of the EPH before the start of the conference (formal ties with Section to be discussed), also thinking of November as Trans History Month

(Co-) organising **workshops and roundtables** with following aspects:

- Co-Creation and community participation in SGM research (including methodology and practical)

- Resilience as a topic of how to tackle disparities in individual and population health outcomes
- Anti-LGBTQIA+ policies as well as best practices

EPH Helsinki 2025

Pre-Conference that would include local civil society (NGOs), other relevant organizations, as well as SGM community members, as a means of more affordable conference participation. Section Member Laura Kihlström offered to help with organizing.

Other Activities

Advocacy opportunities and needs

- Involving policymakers in discussions around SGM health to promote LGBTQIA+ health as a health policy priority and counter anti-LGBTQIA+ policies
- Using our own personal networks, within and outside of EUPHA to promote best practices in SGM (health) policy

Potentially facilitating help efforts for displaced and otherwise disadvantaged LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Joining efforts with other EUPHA Sections dealing with disadvantaged population groups to raise awareness for equity as a health priority, without diminishing visibility and relevance of SGM health in particular.

Potentially forming Working Groups working on specific topics was discussed as a means to ensure continuity of work on different SGM sub-populations. This idea might be explored in the future, currently continuing with rotating topics was seen as a sustainable option. Before forming WGs there would have to be active Section members to spearhead research efforts. In the future, this might facilitate one of the Section's goals (cross-European research collaboration).

AOB and end of meeting

Dr. Van der Star thanked for lively participation in the discussion and closed the meeting at 14:00h.



Pending: Country Roster, Outputs of Sessions (encouraged to brainstorm and suggest, perhaps via word document or similar), Strategic Goal reorientation?