We are pleased to provide you with an update on European public health. In this issue, we look at the future (Health 2020), at new challenges and trends as well as re-emerging diseases (TB). It is evident that continued action is necessary, together in public health and combining old and new.

Of course, we are providing you with the latest information on the 4th European Public Health Conference—Copenhagen 2011.

Dineke Zeegers Paget
EUPHA executive director

EUPHA President’s Column—EUPHA and WHO together in developing the new European policy for health

The Regional Director for Europe confirmed in this issue of the European Journal of Public Health her vision for better health in Europe and identified several strategic priorities for its implementation. For most of them public health is of crucial importance.

Actually the way in which health is considered is changing rapidly. Health is now seen in a much more complex way than it was when it meant only health care services.

It is seen today with its many determinants spread across the whole of society and it is also viewed as one of the key drivers, as well as one of the most important outcomes, of societal development.

Health 2020, the paper produced by WHO European Regional Office in collaboration with an external advisory group where EUPHA has been represented by its current President in response to the need to re-examine the kind of governance mechanisms and instruments that can improve health policy and deliver health outcomes in an equitable and sustainable manner and to consider how priorities are set and strategic goals are implemented.

Health 2020 is intended to be inspiring, challenging and practical.

It should achieve three things:

- To bring together and interconnect new evidence on population health and its determinants, on promising and appropriate governance solutions and on effective interventions for better health, equity and well-being.
- To provide an unifying and overarching value-based policy framework for health development, along with strategic goals, realistic but challenging targets and the tools for monitoring, planning and implementation.
- To be relevant to low-income, medium-income and high-income countries in the European Region and offer practical ways to address current and emerging public health challenges.

Nowadays at the global level there are new challenges and trends: globalization, privatization, widening inequities in the distribution of wealth and the access to health and social services, increasing population migration, accelerating technological innovation, increasing environmental pollution and climate change.

These trends are having a profound impact on health and health equity, as well as on the ways in which society responds to health challenges and have given rise to the need for a renewed paradigm for health improvement.

The context of change is so compelling that a new vision of health governance at the global, regional and national levels is required. Health as a vital element in development must be considered a whole-of-government responsibility, and structures for the advancement of health improvement must reflect this.

EUPHA is representing today a considerable number of European public health researchers, practitioners and policy makers. These people’s expertise is vital for formulating new public health policies, implementing public health programmes and reforming public health practice.

They have repeatedly shown that present structures and processes are not adequate in this new environment, and need urgently to be changed.

This is why EUPHA is happy to support WHO in realizing this change.

Prof. Walter Ricciardi
EUPHA President

EUPHA office news

In the president’s column and the columns of WHO/EURO and the European Commission, we see key messages for public health in Europe. In fact, they are not only presenting key messages, but also key actions, which I would like to highlight even more:

(i) Work together
(ii) Rejuvenate
(iii) Strengthen
(iv) Remain committed

(i) Work together: collaboration is the key to public health in the past, in the present and in the future. As the English proverb states: ’Two heads are better than one.’ EUPHA is dedicated to working together: with our members by supporting them in their activities and highlighting the European dimension of their efforts; with our partners, such as the collaboration with ASPHER, EHMA, EPHA and Eurohealthnet to set up the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation at the beginning of April; and collaborating outside of our network; as was demonstrated at our Amsterdam 2010 conference with several activities on public private partnerships and how to move forward.

(ii) Rejuvenate: it is highly important for the future of public health to interact, communicate with and include the younger generation of public health professionals. Our joint efforts with ASPHER at our conferences have proven successful in increasing the number and activities of younger public health professionals. At the writing of this column, we are about to engage on our newest project—EUPHAnxt—to sensitize the younger population in public health of the European dimension of public health. EUPHAnxt aims at students and young practitioners, researchers and policymakers and offers a wide range of benefits if they enter the EUPHAnxt—EUPHA next generation—where they can share ideas, views, question the ‘old’ ways and take up new challenges.

(iii) Strengthen: this is the key action in public health and consists mainly of continuous capacity and knowledge building. EUPHA is the organization to support this, with its network of more than 12,000 public health professionals interested in learning from each other. Both capacity and knowledge building were adopted in November 2008 as our key strategic objectives and we continue and increase our efforts in this area every year.

(iv) Remain committed: this may be the hardest key action to achieve. It is difficult but essential to remain committed to (European) public
health when ‘old’ diseases (like TB) come back and new challenges (like global warming) keep appearing. It is also difficult (but not impossible!) to continue convincing policymakers of the importance of research in public health and, for instance, the need to include this in the DG Research Green paper on research and innovation.

As our president stated: EUPHA is the largest network of public health professionals in Europe. As such, we can work together, reach the new generation of public health professionals, strengthen each others’ activities and make sure Europe and the world remain committed to public health.

Dineke Zeegers Paget
EUPHA Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR—‘STRENGTHENING PUBLIC HEALTH IN EUROPE’

Health in Europe is changing in ways which offer both challenges and opportunities. My goal as Regional Director is to meet both, and that is why the European Regional Office of WHO has embarked on Health 2020, a new health policy for today’s Europe.

We must strengthen public health. The need is obvious. Overall health is improving, but many still do not enjoy the health and wellbeing they should. Today non-communicable diseases constitute over 85% of the disease burden. Communicable diseases remain an ever-changing threat, as do challenges from the environment, and from disasters and emergencies.

Our chosen definition of public health is ‘the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society’ (Sir Donald Acheson 1988) All of the tasks before us are here, as a responsibility of the whole society.

I see this as a key point. Health must be, in this sense, everyone’s responsibility. Yet it must also be clearly a responsibility and accountability for the whole of government. We shall say more about this governance for health in Health 2020.

Here I will focus on two points. First, the governance function must align the work of the different sectors of society towards health improvement. Secondly, vital public health operations must be carried out if the health of the public is to be secured and advanced. We have defined 10 such essential public health operations, as functional requirements for all countries of the Region.

We are committing ourselves now to rejuvenate and strengthen the work of public health, and developing an action plan to help our Member States renew and strengthen their public health capacities and services. I believe this work will play a vital part in the success of Health 2020 and the improvement of health across Europe.

Zsuzsanna Jakab
Regional Director

TB PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE EU:
THE NEED FOR FURTHER EFFORTS

As we celebrated on 24 March the World TB Day, a recent joint ECDC and WHO EURO surveillance report on TB in Europe stressed the necessity to further strengthen our commitment and efforts for the prevention and control of TB. The publication by ECDC in November 2010 of a follow-up of the Framework Action plan to fight TB in the EU will notably play a key role in this respect.

While the EU Member States continue to mark a decline in the overall notification of TB, we are still confronted with the persistence of key challenges. Treatment outcomes rates are the lowest recorded globally resulting in failure of cure, early relapse and the development of drug-resistant TB. In addition, prevention and
control efforts that have proved successful among most sections of our population turn out to be insufficiently effective when it comes to vulnerable groups.

The EU and the Commission have over the years developed a large array of initiatives against TB.

In 2000, tuberculosis was notably included in the list of priority diseases to be placed under EU-wide surveillance. Through its Research Framework Programme, the Commission supports the development of new treatment, vaccines, drugs and diagnostic tools against tuberculosis. And finally, the Commission also supports developing countries in their tuberculosis control programmes, notably through its contribution to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

In the field of prevention and control of TB in the EU, the setting up of the ECDC has enabled us to strengthen its activities against TB.

Further to a request from the Commission, ECDC developed in 2007 an Action Plan to Fight Tuberculosis in the EU. This plan identifies key areas for strategy development: prompt TB care for all, the development of new tools to address TB, the alarming issues of tuberculosis multi-drug resistant strains and TB/HIV co-infection.

In November 2010, ECDC launched a follow-up to this action plan—‘Progressing towards TB elimination’.

Identifying epidemiological and strategic indicators, this new initiative will improve our capacities by providing a framework for the monitoring and assessment of Europe’s progress towards the elimination of TB. Developed in coordination with other international and regional monitoring activities, this follow-up will represent a new step in our joint efforts to control and ultimately eliminate TB in the European Union.

N. Safrany
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European Commission

The European Public Health Association (EUPHA), the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) and the Danish Society of Public Health (DSOPH) are pleased to invite you to the 4th European Public Health Conference. All partners are busy with the programme and pre-conference activities.

ASPHER plans to organize the Young Researchers’ Forum, an educational village of schools of public health in Europe and is taking the lead in nominations for the Andrija Stampar Award awarded for excellence in public health. The DSOPH plans to include several ‘Scandinavian’ themes in the programme and pre-conferences, including the plenary sessions on the topic of public health and welfare, but also including pre-conferences on nature, health and public health and music, health and public health. Several of EUPHA’s sections will organize pre-conference gatherings and the EUPHA Member Forum is planned for Wednesday 9 November.

We work with and rely on numerous partners, including:
- The European Commission
- The European Centre for Diseases Control
- WHO/EURO
- The Open Society Institute
- The European Public Health Alliance
- The European Health Management Association

We look forward to presenting you with a preliminary programme reflecting the full array of public health in Europe by the beginning of July at: http://www.eupha.org/site/upcoming_conference.php

Do not forget to register for the early bird fee before 15 September 2011.

Finn Kamper-Jørgensen, Chair LOC 2011
Torben Jørgensen, Chair International Scientific Committee 2011