

Editorial

When in Dublin, follow the example set by public health advocates

Last November, we participated in the 16th edition of the European Public Health Conference, in Dublin. Under the theme of “*Our Food, Our Health, Our Earth: A Sustainable Future for Humanity*”, our Director General, Milka Sokolović, our senior advocacy manager, Frazer Goodwin, and myself, took part in several sessions, vivid discussions and countless conversations.

The Conference brought us not only food for thought, but also food for the soul: meeting partners, old and new friends, and people whom we only knew by their email address, or in my case, by their names in the papers and books. Being witness to the hugs, the respectful disagreements, the intellectual and challenging discussions, and the passion in each intervention remind us that we aren't alone when it comes to ensuring better health for all.

The EPHA team kicked off our participation with a breathtaking session, “The making of a leader: women leaders in Public Health - A session for young public health professionals”, organized by EPHA, WHO Europe, and EUPHANxt. Milka, together with Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, Director of Health Policies and System (WHO Europe), Kasia Czabanowska, Professor in Public Health Leadership and Workforce Development, Head of the Department of International Health (Maastricht University), and Iveta Nagyova, President European Public Health Association (EUPHA) opened their hearts and private spheres to share with the audience how to cope – or not-being the leader of a top-notch organisation while being a partner, a daughter, a mother, a friend and a human. Moderated by Emilia de Aragón (WHO Europe), and Monica Georgiana Brînzac, (EUPHANxt), I had the privilege to deliver the closing remarks. The conclusion? Witnessing these great professionals and better humans, being vulnerable, sharing their fears and failing, sets the path not only for future leaders in public health but also for a better world. To the four ladies, the moderators and the crowd: thank you! As promised, we will follow up with a podcast at EPHA's '[Giving Health a Voice](#)'.

In the Opening Plenary we were delighted with the speech of our dearest Amandine Garde (University of Liverpool and EUPHA-LAW), legal expert advisor for EPHA. As a flawless thinker highly knowledgeable of European law, Amandine addressed the European Commission as the sole guardian of the treaties and reminded them of their duties: ensure a high level of public health protection in all policies. If you want to dig in more, don't miss [Amandine's reflections](#).

Also, as part of the plenary sessions, Milka participated as a speaker in the Building the Future One Health workforce session by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), and the European Health Management Association (EHMA). The boss made herself clear: One Health entails massive complexity which requires complex and coordinated solutions. Taking anti-microbial resistance (AMR) as an example, Milka stressed the urgent need for a multidisciplinary yet urgent approach, quoting Dr Danilo Lo Fo Wong, who leads the development of the WHO Roadmap for Action on AMR: in One Health “We don't have to do everything together, but together we have to do everything”.

Since one cannot attend a conference on food and not tackle food environments, EPHA organised the round table “From science to reality: the potential of food environments as a gamechanger”, with the exceptional participation of Dr. Stefanie Vandevijvere (Sciensano), Emma Calvert (BEUC), Amandine Garde (University of

Liverpool and EUPHA-Law), Milka and myself. From the legislation to the papers and policies, we offered a comprehensive review of how by shaping food environments we could shape not only how citizens interact with food, but also their health and social reality. You can read about the how [here](#), however, we cannot ignore the fact that vulnerable populations are the ones suffering the most from the externalities of unhealthy diets. Hence, providing a healthy environment where developing as citizens is a matter of social justice. At EPHA we are fully committed to giving a voice to those unheard.

“If we don’t care about children, what are we doing as society?”, asked me once a brilliant brain. So, we went hands-on with the session Food marketing regulation and civil society mobilization, organized by EUPHA-LAW and with the participation of Mojca Gabrijelčič Blenkus (National Institute of Public Health of Slovenia), Mimi Tatlow-Golden (Open University), Amandine Garde (University of Liverpool and EUPHA-Law), Dorota Sienkiewicz (EuroHealthNet), Emma Calvert (BEUC), and myself. If there was any possible remaining doubt, it was dispelled: voluntary approaches towards unhealthy food marketing for kids don’t work. We need an ambitious directive which [protects children from harmful food marketing](#).

In a nutshell, they were five days of learnings and sharing, strengthening our bonds with already-known partners and creating new connections.

We take the chance to extend our congratulations and gratitude to the EUPHA team for such an exceptional event. We are already looking forward to Lisbon.

Thank you for staying with us, dear reader.

Wishing you a lovely festive period!



Alba Gil

Policy Manager, EPHA

This Month's Top Stories

Big business vs. public health: the hidden forces shaping our health

It's been 20 years since the European Union (EU) set out to promote better health for all. The EU's Farm-to-Fork Strategy and the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan have promised bold measures to improve food environments, but many of these promises remain unfulfilled. The giants of the food industry have been successful in lobbying against EU-wide regulation that could genuinely promote healthier food environments.



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Public Health Community United Against Alcohol-Related Harm in the SANT Report on Non-Communicable Diseases

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Bright lights take aim at EU headquarters: NGOs demand action for sustainable food systems

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EPHA Updates

Securing Stronger Action against Racism and Discrimination to Achieve Health Equity

The pan-European network **DisQo** has defined its priorities and recommendations ahead of the upcoming European elections in 2024, with the overarching goal of securing stronger action against racism and discrimination to achieve health equity. The manifesto gathers **5 key priorities**, focusing on the recognition of racism and discrimination, enhancing social participation, increasing the clarity of definitions, ensuring the collection of equality data and breaking policy silos.



[READ THE MANIFESTO](#)



The critical importance of sustainable funding for health civil society

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A closer look at EPHA's priorities ahead of the European elections

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EPHA Events



Barriers and facilitators towards the digital inclusion of all citizens

30 January | 14:00 - 15:15 CET | Webinar

As the world rapidly goes through a process of digitalisation, health systems are being transformed. The European Health Data Space aims to empower patients to be in control of their own digital health records; telemedicine services are becoming more widely available; artificial intelligence is revolutionizing clinical decision support systems; infodemics spread faster than ever, leading to mistrust in health authorities. Are all European citizens prepared to advocate for their health in this digital transformation?

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Previous Events



Insights from medical doctors involved in AI-based innovation

This webinar features four expert medical doctors involved in AI innovation, discussing the benefits, best practices, and precautions for designing and deploying AI-based tools in health settings. They bring a unique perspective, combining deep knowledge of medical practice and the tech world.

[WATCH THE EVENT](#)



Clean Cooking for Public Health Manifesto Launch Safeguarding health from gas cooking

This event delves into existing literature and recent research on gas stoves, examining the health impacts from doctors' and patients' viewpoints. It fosters cross-disciplinary dialogue and advocates for implementing the Health in All Policies approach, emphasizing product policy. Highlighting the current policy window, we present a manifesto as a call to action for the health and medical community to sign.

[WATCH THE EVENT RECORDING AND SIGN THE MANIFESTO](#)

News From Members



European Respiratory Society

COP28: ERS welcomes progress but calls for action on health effects of climate change

ERS welcomes the progress made during the COP28 meeting and the outcomes of the first global stocktake but expresses deep concern and disappointment over the summit's failure to commit to a full phase out of fossil fuels and its wider implications for health.

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Mental Health Europe

Briefing on Recent EU Policy Developments on Mental Health

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Health Action International

Putting access to insulin in the spotlight

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Safe Food Advocacy Europe

We need to preserve seeds to ensure food security

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