



ASPHER 2016
Deans' & Directors' Retreat

Athens, May 25-27
National School of Public Health

50TH
ANNIVERSARY
**TAKING STOCK
MOVING FORWARD**

ATHENS ASPHER ACCORD

We the representatives of more than 100 member institutions of the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) have convened in Athens, Greece in celebration of a half century of achievements of our Association on the European stage [1966-2016]. In parallel, we are greatly concerned for the predicament and problems engulfing Europe and recognize the need for a vision of hope for harm reduction in population health within a framework of equality. We believe that one ingredient for change is a strengthening of Schools of Public Health. Consequently, we make an appeal for the deliberate strengthening of public health, its services and structures in Europe. This is an appeal to politics at large at this a most critical time for Europe.

Our Association (ASPHER) has forged a resilient European mindset for public health education and is firmly committed to competency development and accreditation for its member institutions. It is a great practical, theoretical and inspirational asset to the health sector, for disease prevention, health promotion and policy development. Its homunculus logo of heart and mind is commensurate with the preservation of dignity, independence and self-esteem of its practitioners, student population and client constituency. Its legacy includes professional public health workforce development.

ASPHER's vision is expressed in its 2020 strategy, enunciated into specific objectives, pivotal to prevailing and to future population health challenges. Its emphasis is on education in a spirit of collaboration and solidarity. Strengthening of public health institutions with sustained improvement of workforce competency training to meet tomorrow's needs are fundamental goals. Improving public health advocacy and leadership are vital to meet the coming challenges. New knowledge acquisition through research and appropriate use of communication technology are essential.

Here in Athens, we proudly call attention to ASPHER's set of inspirational elements emergent from a broad European spectrum of public health expertise in close amalgamation with the World Health Organization-EURO and the international community. These elements have been encapsulated into the organization of a practical platform for European Schools of Public Health of which our institutions are members.

On this auspicious occasion we pressure opinion leaders in Europe, in academia and politics for greater support of public health. This we do as a scientific, social and moral obligation. It is a matter of social conscious, scientific expertise and socioeconomic development.

On ASPHER's 50th Anniversary there are good reasons to reflect on the rise of population vulnerability from austerity, large refugee trails threading Europe and mindless terrorism as well as the ongoing affront to our environment and threat of emerging epidemics and potential disasters. We have good reason to engage in the elaboration of realistic solutions to the daunting realities facing Europe. There are good reasons to conceptualize public health as a crucial and still unused avenue for rational socioeconomic development.

ASPHER's General Assembly, 2016 in Athens provides a unique opportunity to celebrate as well as to raise our small voice, to appeal in accord and unanimity and demand greater recognition for public health and its related institutions.





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We firmly believe that a positive and proactive approach to Schools of Public Health will send out strong signals that open gates to sustainable development with enhanced stability for European society. We also believe that uncertainty reduction can be achieved by more democratic governance of health systems and the application of the collective value system of public health.

On ASPHER's 50th anniversary we call upon European authorities and our Greek hosts to deliberately and unflinchingly support public health. The level of support should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the dramatic problem space of humanitarian crisis. Support must target the health needs of European populations. We urge that impediments to the function of the socially beneficial and historic Hellenic School [1929] be immediately removed and remind the world that this School resulted from a short-lived revolution in public health 90 years ago.

ASPHER also recalls the horrendous population displacements resulting from WWII and the holocaust as well as earlier displacements circa WWI and those most recently in the Balkans. We consider that the protection and promotion of minority and migrant health are of fundamental importance to public health and its practitioners.

ASPHER in Athens not only heralds the known contribution of Schools of Public Health to social progress and protection but also fames itself as a unique and necessary catalyst for needed change. It calls on Europe to accelerate these, our demands for the common good of all Europeans. Investment in our European future must place the sowing of competences both in public health and in the function of Schools of Public Health, much higher on the political agenda of Europe. Not to do so will result in a still poorer Europe. For Europe to compete effectively, Europe its institutions must be strengthened in research and for education within a framework of healthy competition and a healthy population.

On this the 50th Anniversary of ASPHER we its Celebrants and Appellants, are confident that Europe and beyond will heed this landmark event. We remain optimistic that public health, its institutions and ASPHER will receive greater policy attention and that greater consideration will be given to the dangers ahead to our planet and from growing global population inequality and its impact on our continent. Education for public health is one sturdy pillar of support for a healthy future with health. We say that investing in Schools of Public Health is a good thing! It is a good thing for politics and for Europe.

From Athens and in one raised voice, ASPHER is proud to present this the Athens ASPHER Accord.

**Jeffrey Levett and Epida Pavi, ESDY-NSPH, Athens and Robert Otok, ASPHER, Brussels
for the Representatives of Member Institutions
Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER).**

