

# 2023 ASPHER General Assembly

## Minutes (draft)

Wednesday, 3 May, 10:00-12:30 CET  
Venue: Ergife Palace Hotel & Conference Centre  
World Congress on Public Health – Rome 2023, Italy

### 1. Welcome and opening of the meeting

ASPHER President Carlo Signorelli, welcomed ASPHER Members and opened the meeting

### 2. Approval of minutes from the 2022 ASPHER General Assembly

The 2022 ASPHER GA minutes were approved unanimously.

### 3. Acceptance of new members

#### 3.1. Full membership

*RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Population Health, IRELAND*

Presented by: Anne HICKEY

Full membership was approved unanimously.

*Palacky University Olomouc, Faculty of Health Sciences, CZECHIA*

Presented by: Alena PETRAKOVA

Full membership was approved unanimously.

*Paracelsus Medical University, Center for Public Health and HSR, AUSTRIA*

Presented by: Tim JOHANSSON

Full membership was approved unanimously.

#### 3.2. Associate membership

*Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research,*

*Department of Community Medicine & School of Public Health, INDIA*

Presented by: Arun K AGGARWAL

Associate membership was approved unanimously.

*Universidade Amilcar Cabral, German University Institute "Wilhelm von Humboldt", GUINEA-BISSAU*

Presented by: Konrad OBERMANN

Associate membership was approved unanimously.

### 4. Executive Board elections (voting by acclamation)

Nadav DAVIDOVITCH, Ben Gurion University, ISRAEL

ASPHER executive board member Nadav Davidovitch presented his candidacy for the ASPHER Executive Board, standing for re-election to a second term. He presented his work over the course of his first term, which included chairing the ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force, partner to and Focal Point for Israel for the SEEPHI ERASMUS+ capacity building project, contributions to the UCCAIDE project

and representation of ASPHER with APHEA, ECDC, WHO-Europe and EUPHA and promotion of collaboration within the middle east context.

In a second term, Prof Davidovitch plans to continue these activities, adjusting to the context of the post-Covid new normal period, adapting lessons from SEEEPFI to a broader European context, strengthening Israel activities within ASPHER and deepening ASPHER engagement with health inequities with special attention to the role of Climate Change.

Nadav Davidovitch was re-elected to the ASPHER Executive Board by unanimous acclamation.

**Mzwandile MABHALA, University of Chester, UNITED KINGDOM**

Mzwandile (Andi) Mabhala presented his candidacy for the ASPHER Executive Board, standing for election for a first term. He will bring to ASPHER executive board his sociocultural background as a South African and 26 years of experience as a public health specialist, academician and researcher. His sociocultural backgrounds and experiences shaped and deepened his commitment to research and teaching social justice as a foundation for tackling health inequities and necessary for training public health professionals from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

As a member of the ASPHER Executive Board, Prof Mabhala brings his global outlook and track record as a senior academician with an established track record of curriculum development and decolonisation of the curricula. And his research advocacy expertise in the socioeconomic determinants of health and social justice inequalities.

Mzwandile Mabhala was elected to the ASPHER Executive Board by unanimous acclamation.

## **5. Presidential election (voting by acclamation)**

**Henrique BARROS, Institute of Public Health (ISPUP), University of Porto, PORTUGAL**

Henrique Barros presented his candidacy for the ASPHER Presidency, pledging to be faithful to the decades of ASPHER work towards promoting the training and the education of the European Public Health work force, defending the values of high-quality teaching, research and service to the communities across Europe. He believes the ASPHER vision and mission remains relevant particularly in times of emerging crisis, with new challenges for the understanding and the organization of health and health services.

He would promote the new generation of public health leaders providing the conditions for an increasing role of early career people, their mobility and the “hands-on” exchange of best practices experience. He pledged to continue the actions towards a research strategy for ASPHER and the integration of curriculum development progress with a roadmap for research, and to increase ASPHER members presence in Horizon funded activities.

He expects to give higher visibility to the role of ASPHER in dealing with emergencies, with a particular emphasis on preparedness. To promote in-depth discussion, teaching visibility and policy guidance across our members in such topics as planetary health, climate impact on health and health inequities. Finally, he expects to increase ASPHER membership, the involvement of member schools in the association activities and to promote a stronger influence on accreditation activities for higher visibility of ASPHER as a leading institution in the comprehensive defense of population health.

Henrique Barros was elected to the ASPHER Presidency by unanimous acclamation.

## **6. Report from the President**

President Carlo Signorelli reported on ASPHER activities in 2022 related to his presidency agenda. In addition to the regular ASPHER business and continued growth of the ASPHER Next generation platform, activities included response to concerns of the public health community and public health

education related to professionalization of the public health workforce; continued ASPHER schools' response to Covid-19 and other health emergencies, such as war in Europe and climate change.

The Association is advancing on specific projects aimed at improving membership benefits under his presidency including the new ASPHER website with enhanced operability, the new core curriculum for public health to address the changing public health landscape, improved and closer relations with APHEA to address accreditation needs, and enhanced negotiations of collaboration with partners to recognise the role of ASPHER and how this can translate to benefits for our members.

Carlo Signorelli has also made the continued fiscal security of ASPHER a priority. Financial stability secured during the term of past-President John Middleton is paying forward, as will be presented in the Treasurer's report, and will be enhanced with opportunities such as ASPHER's partnership in the World Congress on Public Health as well as strategic inclusion of ASPHER in relevant calls and projects with members and partners.

The President's report was approved unanimously.

## **7. Report from the Treasurer**

ASPHER Treasurer Carla Lopes, ISPUP, University of Porto reported on ASPHER accounts from 2022. She highlighted the improving financial position of ASPHER and growing membership over the past years, with financial stability on course and building of reserves.

In addition to membership fees, the past year saw income from several projects: Sharing European Educational Experience in Public Health for Israel (SEEEPHI), Updating Core Competencies in Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (UCCAIDE), and ECDC training in the area of vaccination and vaccine hesitancy for primary healthcare professionals (VxTrain). Income from these projects is shared as well amongst participating member schools.

Total income and expenses were presented, with a total 2022 income of 767 264 which included project balances brought forward for the previous years and total expenditures of 540 313. A surplus of 226 950 remained. Projections were made for the 2023/2024 budgets with a similar balance of 249 500 remaining based on expected costs.

A key consideration for going forward is to how to balance managing projects with the related administrative burden and ensuring overall member engagement. In order to better serve membership and considering the surplus, the ASPHER Executive Board has recommended hiring an addition secretariat staff person to coordinate membership and member engagement, with the intention to enhance benefits to members, further growth of membership and increase the number of member-led projects.

The Treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

## **8. Report from the Secretariat**

ASPHER Director Robert Otok reported on the work of the ASPHER Secretariat, indicating its key functions, which include: Coordination & Synergy; Support & Advice; Member & Partner Relations; and Communication & Online infrastructure.

In his reflections and updates Mr Otok noted the attention to the growing and dynamic membership network with three secretariat staff members aided by support from in-office interns. Specific Association agenda areas are further supported by engagement of ASPHER Fellows motivated to give attention to specific topic areas in line with their career goals and ambitions. The Secretariate further benefits from an engaged Executive Board with regular meetings (4 in-person in 2022 and others online)

The secretariat expects to move to a new location in 2023 (latest 2024) to accommodate growing office requirements.

The Work plan going forward in 2023/2024 will include: General management and running of the organisation; Membership coordination for rapid response and PEER scheme; Enhancing the Association online infrastructure with the launch of a new website; Enhancing the Association next generation agenda through the fellowship programme, internships, YPPs and ASSETS; Synergy and consolidation with other relevant public health organisations for better impact and sustainability in Europe and globally.

Robert provided a highlight of upcoming ASPHER related schedule for 2023/2024:

- ASSETS summer school (Brussels): 3 – 6 July 2023
- Deans' & Directors' Retreat (Dublin): 31 August – 2 September 2023
- EPH Conference (Dublin): 8 – 11 November 2023
- Deans' & Directors' Retreat (Porto): June 2024 (exact dates tbc)
- EPH Conference (Lisbon): 12 – 15 November 2024

ASPHER President Carlo Signorelli thanked Robert Otok and the Secretariat for their work.

The Secretariat's report was approved unanimously.

## 9. Communications

### 9.1. Awards 2023 – call for nominations

Robert Otok reported on the ASPHER 2023 Awards Call for nominations. General Assembly Members should consider submitting nominations for the Andrija Stampar Medal, the Research Excellence Award, the Teaching & Practice Excellence Award, and the Early Career Excellence Award.

He invited members to send nomination(s) with short endorsement letter by midnight, 14 May accompanied by a short endorsement letter to [office@aspher.org](mailto:office@aspher.org).

### 9.2. Honours Platform

Past President and co-chair of the Honours Platform, John Middleton gave the report from the Honours Platform. He thanked outgoing co-chairs Jose Maria Martin and Kasia Czabanowska, as well as Selma Sogoric, Andrija Stampar School of Public Health, Zagreb, Croatia who is joining him now as co-chair.

Prof Middleton presented the Honours Platform 2023-24 work programme to include: the ASSETS Summer School, programme of online and in person lectures, creation of a calendar of significant public health events and anniversaries, providing supplemental materials for the online version of the New Public Health textbook 4<sup>th</sup> edition, supporting the lobby for the Pandemic Preparedness Treaty and continued support and mentoring for early career Public Health Professionals

### 9.3. Next Generation Platform

Ines Siepman, ASPHER Executive Board and ASPHER Young Professionals Coordinator updated on the ASPHER Next Generation Platform which continues with three main types of engagement: 1. Long-term, funded or education-affiliated early career opportunities (ASPHER fellows and interns), 2. Long-term volunteer engagement (ASPHER Young Professionals Programme - YPP), and 3. Single-event opportunities (events, Young Researcher Forums, ASSETS, etc.).

In the past year, ASPHER has coordinated two Young Researcher Forums and the summer training school, ASSETS, in conjunction with the first-ever in-person YPP event in Brussels. The Young Professionals Programme had its third intake period as the group enters its fourth year. ASPHER has

also expanded its fellows programme, with six regular and associate fellows engaged in a variety of projects. ASPHER interns have also contributed greatly in the past year, with five active interns.

#### 9.4. Task Force and other project groups

Updates of the ongoing ASPHER task force and working group activities were made, which included the Covid-19 Task Force (Chair: Nadav Davidovitch, Ben Gurion University); WHO-ASPHER Professionalisation of the Public Health Workforce Task Force (Chair: Kasia Czabanowska, University of Maastricht); Task force on War (Chair: Oliver Razum, Bielefeld University); Undergraduate Education Working Group (Chair: Kai Michelsen, Fulda University of Applied Sciences); Economic Evaluation in Healthcare in Europe Working Group (Chair: Milena Pavlova, University of Maastricht). In addition, there are several fellowship-led agendas advancing. These include: Climate and Health; Digital Public Health; diversity and intersectionality; and social accountability.

All ASPHER Members are invited to join currently active groups. If you wish to join a task force or working group or to propose a new working group, contact the secretariat at [office@aspher.org](mailto:office@aspher.org).

#### 9.5. Core Curriculum Review

ASPHER Executive Board Member and Core Curriculum Lead, Mary Codd, University College Dublin, Ireland presented progress on the Core Curriculum Project progress. She is working with ASPHER Fellow Carl Konyard in consultation with public health experts, students and early career professionals, and schools of public health. An extensive update and consultation of the project will be made during the ASPHER Deans' & Directors' Retreat with a full day devoted to core curriculum and keeping attention to the changing public health landscape. All ASPHER members are invited to participate.

#### 9.6. Deans' & Directors Retreat – Dublin 2023

ASPHER Executive Board Member and 2023 Dublin Retreat Chair, Mary Codd updated on plans for the ASPHER Dublin 2023 Deans' & Directors' Retreat taking place from 31 August – 02 September. The programme will consist of a day focussed on the ASPHER Core Curriculum Programme on Day1, 31 August. The Gala dinner will be held the evening of the 31 including the ASPHER 2023 Awards Ceremony and Andrija Stampar Medal laudation. Day 2, Friday 01 September will be dedicated to profiling member schools of public health, facilitating networking and collaboration. On Saturday 02 September, the MPH programme at University College Dublin will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary – all ASPHER members are invited to attend. A special site-seeing social programme is planned for Sunday 04 September.

Registration for the Deans' & Directors Retreat is open and it is free to attend. All ASPHER Deans, Directors, Department heads and Faculty are encouraged to register.

#### 9.7. APHEA updates

Suzanne Babich, Fairbanks School of Public Health, Indiana University and APHEA Board of Accreditation Chair, provided an update on APHEA's operations.

### 10. Closing of the meeting

Carlo Signorelli thanked the ASPHER Membership for their attendance and closed the meeting.