



Editorial

Safeguarding mental health and well-being in a rapidly digitalising world

During her statement as candidate for a second mandate at the European Parliament, Ursula von der Leyen expressed her deep concern about the current mental health crisis. In her speech, she particularly focused on the needs of children and teenagers, and the role of social media, addictive designs and excessive screen use as factors causing the rampant increase in cyberbullying and self-harm behaviors among young people. She promised to take action and tackle these “plagues” during the next mandate, conducting for the first time a European-wide inquiry on the impact of social media on the well-being of young people.

We praise this commitment and share the goal to prioritise and protect mental health in times of digital transformation. The consequences of living in a digital world on the well-being of the population are complex and diverse. Digital interactions can trigger devastating effects, but they can also lead to improved levels of psychological well-being. For example, on the one hand, social media platforms are increasingly being used to threaten and harass individuals online, a practice referred to as cyberbullying victimisation. On the other hand, the digital inclusion of older adults has proven to be an effective measure against unwanted loneliness. Moreover, mental health apps have rapidly proliferated, seeking to bridge the gap in access to mental health services, but their effectiveness and ethical use remain a subject of debate.

To foster the change that we are seeking, we lack high quality evidence on which to build effective interventions and comprehensive policies. The needs of the most vulnerable communities should be identified, quantified and qualitatively understood. The tools to measure such needs require creative and timely improvements to better capture the realities they target. Predisposing and mitigating factors should be integrally mapped and interconnected, and the actions taken must remain clearly uninfluenced by commercial interests.

In this edition of our newsletter, our four guest articles tackle these important challenges and offer valuable insights into how we can protect and promote mental health in times of digital transformation.



Jaisalmer De Frutos Lucas

Policy Manager, EPHA

This Month's Top Stories



Protecting the mental health of children and young people online: a shared responsibility

By Francesca Centola & Fatima Awil, Mental Health Europe

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Strengthening countries' cooperation to safeguard children and adolescents from screen addiction and protect mental health

By Dr Line Farah, Director of the national digital programs, French Ministry of labour, health and solidarity

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Social media is bad for youth mental health: Where do we go from here?

By Dr. Lucía Vaquero, Marie Skłodowska-Curie, Postdoctoral fellow, NYU

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Mental health apps: Not a friend but a foe for public health

By Dr. Nicole Gross, National College of Ireland

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EPHA Updates



Smoke free environment proposal – A welcome first step, but much still left to be done

The Commission has proposed a revision of the Council recommendation on Smoke Free Environments that broadens its scope to cover more areas where people, particularly the young, are exposed to tobacco smoke. It also extends the scope of the recommendation to Novel and Emerging Nicotine and Tobacco Products.

However, public health NGOs also underscore that whilst necessary, this is only a first step.

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Towards the fulfilment of the Right to Health of People of African Descent: A consultation and recommendation report for the post-2025 EU Anti-racism Action Plan

On 27 August 2024, EPHA and OHCHR formally presented the Consultation report and recommendations for the post-2025 EU Anti-Racism Action Plan to the Anti-Racism Coordination Team within DG JUST's Unit D2 Non-Discrimination at the European Commission.



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EPHA Response to WHO Consultation on the Global Plan of Action (GPoA) on Climate Change and Health

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Clean Air Day: EU Healthy Air Coalition call to strengthen EU's clean air measures to sustain the EU's quality of life and ensure greater preventative health

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EPHA Events

Join our ROBUST event on 2 October

Are you interested in what we can learn from adaptation and innovation during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Join the ROBUST project team in Brussels on **2nd October**, where you will hear about cutting-edge research into crisis governance in the public sector, followed by a workshop and networking lunch.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Data-informed Health Policy Webinar, 6 November, 10:00 – 11:30 CET

Join us for a webinar exploring **the role of high-quality data in shaping effective public health strategies.**

Experts from **civil society** and **research institutions** will discuss key initiatives, including the **European Health Data Space**, disaggregated data for health equity, lifestyle interventions, and patient empowerment.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

News From Members



ELPA invites you to the European Liver Screening Week 2024, taking place under the patronage of the European Parliament. The event aims at promoting liver health for all during October Liver Cancer Awareness Month.

Participate in a week of free liver screenings, expert advice, and interactive activities. Whether you're interested in learning more about liver health, getting screened, or simply discovering the importance of this vital organ, there's something for everyone. Save the date and seize this opportunity to learn more about liver health!



Safe Food Advocacy Europe

Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE) cordially invites you to the **Consumers come first Conference 2024: Defining Sustainable Food Systems**, focusing on transparency, awareness, and labelling. Experts and policymakers will address key topics like natural claims, food waste, NCDs, acrylamide, and ultra-processed foods.

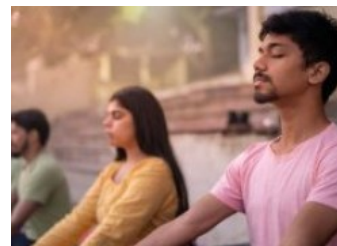
The event will be held on **19 November (09:30 – 17:30)** at [Scotland House](#), Rond-Point Robert Schuman 6, 1040 Brussels.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

British Society of Lifestyle Medicine

Article: Breathing Inefficiently Impacts Sleep, Exercise, Mental Health, Appetite, Relationships & Addiction

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European Cancer Organisation

Community 356 Roundtable: The EU's HTA regulation

On Tuesday 8 October from 15:00-17:30 CEST, the 2024 ECO Community 365 Roundtable series will continue with a spotlight placed on the issue of 'EU Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Cooperation'.

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EuroNET MRPH

Call for applications: Apply for the Organising Committee for the EuroNet MRPH Spring Meeting 2025.

Deadline: 3 October 2024.

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The European Society for Organ Transplantation

Funding opportunity: ESOT Grants Programme 2025 is now open!

Deadline: 31 October 2024.

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Safe Food Advocacy Europe

Article: 3,600 food contact chemicals found in humans.

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Wemos

#SeeMe campaign: Time for intersectionality.

Full article in Dutch

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Other News



Safeguarding Civil Society participation in health policy making

On 26 Sept at 9am CEST, EPHA's Head of Policy Raymond Gemen will be joining a panel discussion on meaningful engagement of civil society in policy-making at European Health Forum Gastein! The session is organised in the context of the Better Regulation for Better Health project, to which EPHA contributes.

[WATCH ONLINE](#)

European Commission call for applications to join the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Stakeholder Network.

The call is aimed at organisations involved in Union cooperation on HTA, such as patient associations, health professionals, technology developers, and other health-related NGOs.



Deadline: 9 October 2024, 17:00 CEST.

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AI Safety Fundamentals - AI Governance Course

Join a 12 week online course, covering a range of policy levers for steering AI development.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

The Lancet

Academic paper: AI in health care and the fragile pursuit of equity and social justice

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Nature

Academic paper: Mapping the regulatory landscape for artificial intelligence in health within the European Union

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Nature

Academic paper: Evaluation and mitigation of the limitations of large language models in clinical decision-making

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EPHA (AISBL) is the European Platform bringing together public health organisations representing health professionals, patients groups, health promotion and disease specific NGOs, academic groupings and other health associations. The European Public Health Alliance has received funding under an operating grant from the European Union's EU4Health Programme (2021-2027). The content of this email represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains. Transparency Register Number: 18941013532-08

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