

Internationellt

Agency for Accreditation of Public Health Education in Europe

Press Release Brussels, 15 April 2011

Setting up an Agency for Accreditation of Public Health Education in Europe April 1, 2011 marked the launching of the Agency for Public Health Accreditation in Europe (APHEA). APHEA, started by a consortium of prominent European organisations in public health, is the first European agency of its kind to accredit the Master of Public Health degree and its equivalent, seeking to promote high quality standards for public health education at the graduate level. The consortium includes The European Association of Schools of Public Health in Europe (ASPHER), the European Public Health Association (EUPHA), the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), and the European Health Management Association (EHMA).

This event, held at the ASPHER Office in Brussels where the agency will be based, was attended by all consortium members as well as numerous representatives from schools of public health across the European region. The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Kazakhstan School of Public Health have indicated interest in being in the first group to undergo accreditation of their programmes. The accreditation process will entail eligibility, self-evaluation, and external evaluation phases and take approximately one year to complete.

This agency will contribute to the development and harmonisation of public health education throughout Europe, provide an added value with regard to national quality assurance and accreditation, and ultimately improve the quality of the public health workforce in Europe and its competitiveness globally.

Programmes leading to a Master of Public Health are at present evaluated or accredited by national education authorities in most countries within the European Region. However, there is presently no specific accreditation system for education in public health at the European level. A programme accredited by national authorities alone, no matter how rigorously the accreditation process is carried out, still lacks the international recognition that may come from a European accreditation system. European accreditation will therefore serve as an additional proof of quality for students, academics, partner institutions, and funding bodies. Establishment of the European system will help many institutions to improve their quality and raise their profile. A degree from a European accredited programme potentially provides the graduate with better opportunities for employment internationally and allows for transferability of qualifications. It also allows for greater benefit to foreign students who may wish to study in a particular country and will now be able to bring home an internationally recognized degree. The accreditation process of the first two applicants will begin in September of this year.