In May 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic ceased to be a public health emergency of international concern. However, health systems have not come out of the pandemic unscathed, and now need to strengthen their preparedness and resilience for the next health crisis.

In addition to communicable diseases, countries globally and specifically in the WHO European Region face multifaceted public health challenges: climate change, urbanization, socioeconomic turbulence, noncommunicable diseases, mental and behavioural health risks, misinformation, inequalities, and an exhausted health and care workforce.

To address these public health challenges effectively and sustainably, countries must identify their underlying causes – ranging from biological mechanisms to societal organization – and invest in informed public health leadership. This entails making decisions and taking action based on the best available scientific information while upholding personal and professional ethics and values.

Inspired by the WHO European Programme of Work 2020–2025 – “United Action for Better Health in Europe” and the Regional Director’s vision of leaving no one behind, WHO/Europe identified the need to support Member States in their efforts to strengthen their public health leadership capacities.

In 2022, the WHO Athens Office on Quality of Care and Patient Safety collaborated with the Italian National Institute of Health (ISS), to co-develop the first ever European Public Health Leadership Course. The main aim of the course was to strengthen the leadership competencies of public health professionals from selected Member States in the WHO European Region.

Enhanced with lessons learned from the first iteration in 2022, the second European Public Health Leadership Course will take place in November 2023. This year’s course is co-developed by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the University of Bordeaux, specifically its School of Public Health (ISPED) and Digital Public Health Graduate Program (DPH), in collaboration with the Bordeaux Population Health Research Centre of the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm) and the Care and Public Health Research Institute (CAPHRI) of the Maastricht university.

Event details

- **Date:** 13–24 November 2023
- **Location:** ISPED/University of Bordeaux, France
- **Format:** blended
- **Week 1 (13–17 November):** online (prerecorded lectures, disseminated material and online peer activities)
- **Week 2 (20–24 November):** in-person (residential lectures, expert sessions, coaching sessions, group work, interactive workshops and networking time)

**Participants:** public health professionals and professionals from public health-related fields, representative nominees from the WHO European Region and WHO African Region.

**Scope and objectives**

The blended learning format of the Leadership Course will allow participants to get to know one another online and prepare for the in-person week, when they will work in groups and have the opportunity to discuss more complex concepts.

The objectives of the Leadership Course are to:

1. Provide an overview and deeper understanding of the causes of global and regional challenges in public health;
2. Enhance capacity to identify, mobilize and apply support in identifying innovative ways to address challenges with a focus on values, ethics and evidence-informed policy;
3. Strengthen leadership skills, enable self-assessment of competencies, and enhance communication and soft skills through collaborative processes and mentoring;
4. Exercise public health policy development and implementation strategies;
5. Foster change in public health leadership at local, subnational and national levels; and
6. Contribute at the European level to the creation of a public health innovation network.

**Scope and purpose**

WHO European Public Health Leadership Course

13–24 November 2023

Bordeaux, France

World Health Organization

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