

COTEC MEMBERSHIP IN EPHA

COTEC has since 2011 been a full member of European Public Health Alliance, EPHA. EPHA is a NGO advocating for better health in Europe. EPHA's mission is to bring together the public health community to provide thought leadership and facilitate change; to build public health capacity to deliver equitable solutions to European public health challenges, to improve health and reduce health inequalities. The organisation's vision is of a Europe with universal good health and well-being, where all have access to a sustainable and high quality health system.

EPHA has 99 members: public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals, and disease groups working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe. EPHA is a member of, among others, the Social Platform, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), and the EU Civil Society Contact Group. Please visit www.eph.org to learn more about the organisation.

As a member of EPHA COTEC was expecting to have better opportunities to raise awareness of occupational therapy and to announce what the profession could contribute to public health issues in Europe and on the other hand learn more on EU decision making and have better channels for networking in the European health and social arena.

The annual membership fee is 800 euros (2016).

The strategy and activities of EPHA have however a new focus and are not very much in line with COTEC's Strategic Plan. Much of the EPHA activities have a focus on topics which are not COTEC strategic priorities such as nutrition, alcohol, tobacco and drug policies and roma population. COTEC's contribution to EPHA is minor, partly due to the limited financial and human resources, and EPHA does not contribute to COTEC needs and plans. The Executive Committee does not see that EPHA represents the needs and does not use the expertise of the Allied Health Professions in an effective way. This has been discussed with another allied health member organisation of EPHA, the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD). EPHA has however assured that they are interested in having organisations of allied health professions as members and COTEC awaits to receive a response to communication around this. The General Assembly will get an oral presentation of the outcome.

Also the screening and circulating of publications, open calls and consultations on (public) health issues has not been as comprehensive as expected so COTEC's ability to follow the discussions and take part in the policy making processes has not increased significantly by EPHA membership.

As EPHA and COTEC strategic aims do not seem to meet during the existing / next period of the organisations' strategic plans, the Executive Committee would like the General Assembly to discuss the relevancy of EPHA membership. COTEC President has informed EPHA President about this in April and a reduced membership fee for 2016 has been requested for. After the decision of the GA COTEC membership in EPHA will either be retained from 2017 on or concluded at the end of 2016.