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# NEWSLETTER

*International Federation of Environmental Health*

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July 2011 Edition

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## Welcome to the July edition of the IFEH Newsletter.

A recent report published by the World Health Organisation indicated that of the 57 million deaths globally in 2008, 36 million, or 63% were due to noncommunicable diseases (NCD). The four main NCD are cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic lung diseases. Not unsurprisingly the burden of these diseases is rising disproportionately among lower income countries and populations. In 2008, nearly 80% of NCD deaths, 29 million, occurred in low and middle income countries. In these countries 29% of NCD deaths occur in people under the age of 60. The leading causes of NCD deaths in 2008 were cardiovascular diseases, which accounted for 17 million or 48% of all NCD deaths; cancers, 7.6 million or 21% of all NCD deaths; respiratory diseases including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, 4.2 million; and Diabetes, 1.3 million deaths. Eighty percent of premature heart disease, stroke and diabetes can be prevented. Common, preventable risk factors underlie most noncommunicable diseases. Most are the result of four particular behaviours (tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and the harmful use of alcohol) that lead to four key metabolic/physiological changes (raised blood pressure, overweight/obesity, raised blood glucose and raised cholesterol).

The four main NCD deaths occur in areas where environmental health professionals, with their public health credentials, can influence and make a significant contribution to reducing unnecessary pain and suffering and drain on the health services. As many as 13 million deaths can be prevented every year by making our environments healthier. It is alarming therefore that in many countries, particularly in the northern hemisphere, environmental health service budgets are being cut. When will politicians realise that investing in good environmental health practice is a way of reducing health service costs? Unfortunately all too often the politicians who make unwise decisions are long gone by the time the error of their ways turns into another public health crisis.

## World Rabies Day

World Rabies Day, which this year will take place on the 28 September, highlights the impact of human and animal rabies and promotes how to prevent and stop the disease by combating it in animals. Sponsors - the Alliance for Rabies Control and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - report that 55,000 people die every year from rabies, an average of one death every 10 minutes.

There are safe and effective vaccines available for people who have been bitten by an animal that might have the disease, but usage in developing countries is low due to the high cost.

## IFEH Council meeting and AGM

The next meeting of the IFEH Council will take place in the Discovery Kartika Plaza Hotel, Kuta, Bali on Sunday 25 September 2011 with the Annual General Meeting on Monday 26 September, World Environmental Health Day.

## IFEH European Group meeting

Representatives from a number of our European member organisations met on the 1st of April in Lisbon, Portugal. This was the first meeting attended and hosted by our newest European member, the Portuguese Society of Environmental Health (SPSA) and was held in the grand surroundings of the Lisbon City Hall.

Our hosts gave a presentation on the organisation and delivery of Environmental Health in Portugal which is broad based and delivered at both national and local level.

Round table reports from member organisations began to tell the same story of financial constraints on recruitment and training throughout the public service but overall environmental health seemed to be surviving the cutbacks pretty well in most countries. Several members reported reorganisations and consolidation of services resulting, in the Netherlands, in the formation of a much larger member organisation of about 1300 members (the Treasurer smiled at this news!!).



Steen Fogde from ENVINA has moved from the public service into the private sector as Chief Executive of a Danish NGO and will no longer represent ENVINA at our meetings. Members round the table paid tribute to Steen's long service as one of our Danish representatives and wished him well in his new post. Jan Pedersen is Steen's replacement.

Also present as an observer at the meeting was José M<sup>a</sup> Ordóñez Iriarte from SESA the Spanish Environmental Health organisation. SESA is in the process of joining IFEH as is the Croatian Sanitary Association.

Members were reminded that Kati (BVLK) and Steve (CIEH) will at the end of this year completed their two years as Chair and Secretary.

It was agreed that the next meeting of EFEH will be in Belfast on Saturday 12th November 2011.

### **The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS).**

The REHIS Annual Conference 2011, the principal Environmental Health event to take place in Scotland, was held in Renfrew on 25 and 26 May. Highlights included a thought provoking Presidential Address by Acting President Rod House which was followed by a range of excellent presentations made by eminent speakers including a Keynote Address by Professor Jim McEwen. The conference also featured the launch of the Institute's Annual Environmental Health Review for 2010. Collated and published by the Institute the review highlights the contribution made to Environmental Health by a wide range of partners working across Scotland. Also launched at conference was the Gaelic portal on the Institute's website along with The Essentials of Food Hygiene handbook in Gaelic. The conference proved to be a great success and special thanks go to Dr Jim Smith from Australia, for presenting a paper in the Food Safety Session and for giving the Toast to the Institute at the Conference Dinner, and to David Kendell, the Chief EHO with the Government of Bermuda, for presenting a paper in the Islands and Rural Health Session.

The conference programme was only slightly affected by the unseasonal stormy weather in Scotland and by the volcanic ash cloud courtesy of Iceland both of which caused havoc to flight schedules. Thankfully Richard Sprenger was on hand to present a paper in the Food Safety Session and Dr Kaarin Goodburn of the Chilled Food Association was able to join us as a presenter using Skype to give her paper on Listeria – a first for REHIS!

### **Environmental Health Manifesto**

The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland launched its Environmental Health Manifesto for Scotland ahead of the recent elections to the Scottish Parliament. All prospective MSPs received a copy by email and a large number pledged their support for the Manifesto. Copies were also sent to all Chief EHOs and the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland has also pledged its support. All newly elected MSPs have received copies. The full manifesto document and the two page flyer can be downloaded from the Institute's website, [www.rehis.com](http://www.rehis.com).

### **All Island Conference May 2011 - Back to the Future**

This annual conference organised jointly by Environmental Health Officers Association and the Northern Ireland Region of Chartered Institute of Environmental Health focused this year on the breadth of Environmental Health looking at where we had come from, what we are still fighting with, and where we are going in the future.

Peter Wright, CIEH, repeated a presentation first given to the Sanitary Association of Manchester in 1854 by Dr John Hatton, Surgeon to the Dispensary of Charlton upon Medlock, and set us thinking that in some ways things haven't changed very much. We are still concerned with controlling infectious diseases and ensuring safe food and suitable housing.

Other presentations ranged through food borne illness, food fraud, emerging issues from cosmetics, body piercing and foot nibbling (little fishes!!) right to the issues that should concern us around the development and use of nanotechnology.

New enforcement powers and making the law work gave encouragement and food for thought and the old favourites at the forefront of public health – port health and the International Health Regulations and pest control, particularly the emergence of mosquito problems in Fingal – show that we must be ever vigilant.

As with every conference there has to be a social side, and boy do we have a social side! Music, dancing, singing and (of course) imbibing the national liquors into the very early hours, but lots of delegates still in on time for the Friday morning presentations.

We also welcomed guests as we do each year from REHIS and CIEH HQ, they've got the hang of it now and come prepared for very little sleep and lots of craic.

Another great Conference (the fifteenth in this series) and everyone looking forward to next year.



Peter Wright and Jennifer Parkinson, Chairman CIEH NI region.

## Association of Public Health Inspectors – Cyprus (APHIC)

The Annual Dinner of the APHIC was held on Saturday 7 May 2011 at the Elysium Beach Hotel, Paphos. Over 200 delegates were present at this event. Guests of the APHIC were Dr Christos Patsalides, Minister of Health, Mr Dionisis Mavronikolas, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr Stelios Gregoriou, Director Medical and Public Health Services, Dr Yiannis Kalakoutas, Director of Mental Health Services, Dr Olga Kalakoutas, Chief Medical Officer and the Past President of IFEH. During the evening a number of presentations were made on behalf of the APHIC.

## Africa Academy for Environmental Health builds relationships in Scotland

The Executive Committee (EXCO) of the Africa Academy for Environmental Health held a very successful workshop from 14-18 March 2011 in Glasgow. The main aim of the workshop was to progress on some of the few outstanding objectives that are part of the deliverables of a British Council grant as part of a DelpHE (Developing Partnerships in Higher Education) award.



EXCO members and colleagues from Scotland at REHIS HQ, Edinburgh.

The host for the workshop, The Department of Civil Engineering and Environmental Health at the University of Strathclyde, did an excellent job in ensuring that the Academy was at home in a typical Scottish Environment. One of the highlights of the workshop was a visit to Edinburgh and specifically the offices of the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland. The workshop was concluded at the meeting and the hospitality from Tom Bell, Bernard Forteath and other staff was highly appreciated. All of the EXCO members left Scotland with very good memories and reassurance that their commitment to even further strengthening the links and relationship between Africa and our Scottish colleagues. A full report by Dr Englebrecht, Chairperson of the Africa Academy, will be published in the summer edition of the Institute's Journal *Environmental Health Scotland*. Further information on the AAEH is available on the IFEH website [www.ifeh.org/afa/](http://www.ifeh.org/afa/).

### **12th World Congress on Environmental Health – a message from the Organizing Committee**

There is less than a year until the 12th World Congress on Environmental Health due to be held in Vilnius, Lithuania on 21-27 May 2012.

The organizers of the Congress have the great honour and pleasure of inviting you to take part in this exceptional international event.

The Congress will focus on the most relevant issues that reflect the main theme of the Congress – “New Technologies, Healthy Human Being and Environment” including traditional topics and aspects of environmental health, such as health impact and health risk assessment, noise and electromagnetic fields impact, food safety and public education. The Congress will also touch new challenges to public health – such as information technologies, gene engineering, new epidemics, and climate change. We are also planning some interesting visits to Lithuanian state and private institutions to reflect achievements in public and environmental health.



Vilnius, the historical capital of Lithuania, dating back to the 14th century, has the most beautiful and the largest old town, awarded with the status of World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, with Vilnius University being the oldest one in Eastern Europe. It is rapidly expanding as a modern European capital, so you can experience the harmony of the old and the new Vilnius. For the participants of the Congress this will provide a beautiful atmosphere and the mood for work and friendship.

Take a few minutes of your time and visit the official webpage of the Congress at [www.ifeh2012.org](http://www.ifeh2012.org) and find more information concerning programme, registration, travel information. There is special section in the webpage, “Notice of interest”, where you can leave your contacts, so that up to date information will reach you.

We are planning to launch registration and abstract submission in September. So be ready and be one of the first to register!

Best wishes from sunny Vilnius!

**Finally** the next edition of the Newsletter will be published in October 2011. If you have any news for the Newsletter from your organisation please send it to me by the first week in September. My thanks go to Steve Cooper, Andrius Kavaliunas, Tom Bell, Katie Carr, Andrew Forteath and Henning Hansen who have assisted in the production of this issue.