The World Federation of Public Health Associations will be launching *A Global Charter for the Public’s Health* during this year’s World Health Assembly on the 23rd of May 2016.

This much awaited Charter, almost 30 years since the launch of the influential Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion (November, 1986), once again recognises public health as the essence of everyday life, which is crucial for social development, equity and stability. It takes into account the new challenges emanating from globalisation with increasingly faster flows of goods, services, finance, people and ideas across international borders, recognising that globalisation can have both positive and negative impacts on health.

Of particular importance, the Charter calls on governments to take into account the impact of social, psychological and environmental health determinants, including economic constraints, living conditions, demographic changes and unhealthy lifestyles. This is an echo of some of the key points of the World Health Organisation’s European policy framework Health 2020, which calls on Government Ministers of Health to become Ministers for Health; leaders in health, working and advocating for the improvement of health through a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach.

Above all, the Charter calls for new leaders in public health and the engagement of public health in significant decision-making processes. Health protection, prevention and promotion need to be strengthened along with a number of enabler functions such as good governance, more effective public health advocacy, and capacity building.

Quoting the WFPHA’s concluding statement of its press release on the Charter: “This is the beginning of a process embracing the conceptualization of global public health and the development of strategic capacities for all professionals that will be part of a new health era, more dedicated to preventive solutions.”

*The Malta Association of Public Health Medicine is a member organisation of the European Public Health Association and the World Federation of Public Health Associations*