Editorial

Public Health research, practice and education in Germany experienced a significant boom during the last decade. Reason for this development was the strong and persistent support of the German Federal Ministry for Research and Education during the last years. In the course of this patronage, which is expiring in 2002, five Public Health Research Associations representing different German regions were founded (Bavaria, North-Rhine-Westphalia, Northern Germany, Berlin, and Saxony). Each of these associations realized a large number of Public Health research projects demonstrating the multi-disciplinary and comprehensive scientific nature of this field. Numerous young scientists were educated and introduced to the varying research activities. Thus, the attention of the scientific community was turned to Public Health research. The research associations managed to acquire sponsors from various other institutions to finance further research projects. This is a guarantee for further development of public health research in our country. Additionally postgraduate study courses in Public Health in several medical faculties and universities respectively were founded, offering the chance of comprehensive Public Health education.

As a further step for the enforcement of Public Health in Germany the 10th annual conference of the European Public Health Association is taking place for the first time in our country. The title of the Dresden congress "Bridging the gap between research and policy in Public Health. Information, Promotion and Training" lines up the still existing demand for improving transfer between research on one hand and practice, policy and economy on the other hand. By gathering representatives from these different areas the meeting shall contribute to improve transfer of research results into practice, policy and economy.

As editor-in-chief of the *Zeitschrift für Gesundheitswissenschaften* / Journal of Public Health I was exerted to create an issue assembling contributions with close relation to a main topic of the conference: Information, Promotion and Training: the contribution of *van Dijk and de Bakker* is an article about prescription behaviour of Dutch general practitioners. The influence of Dutch peer review groups on volume and costs of frequently prescribed drugs is analysed. Three methods are introduced to improve professionalism of the Peer Review Groups. *Wildner et al.* discuss patients' rights for information and their information needs. They report about results of telephone-based surveys, which were conducted in different towns. They point out areas that are not sufficiently covered by existing information processes and outline further topics that are combined with a particularly high need for information. Since one of the most important issues of public health is improvement of health systems the article of *Möller et al.* provides a valuable contribution. It discusses the evaluation of health care systems with particular consideration of the World Health Report 2000. To develop sufficient interventions in the social and health sector it is necessary to link social and health reporting processes. *Bardehle et al.* give an overview of present efforts in social and health reporting in Germany. They

underline that the linkage of social and health reporting still is inadequate in many regions of the country. The authors introduce some possibilities to solve this unsatisfactory situation. With the establishment of Public Health Research Associations various courses of postgraduate Public Health studies were launched in Germany. *Schienkiewitz et al.* provide results of Public Health students, who finished their postgraduate studies during the last years and give an outline about their professional career. *Hirsch et al.* present an analysis of respiratory symptoms in children related to NO₂-exposure. They compared NO₂-background exposure with exposure estimated by traffic related pollutants and found that respiratory symptoms were strongly associated with NO₂-background levels. The next contribution of this issue introduces an intervention concept that was conducted and tested in primary schools. *Müller et al.* present the concept "Primary school in motion" and strengthen the effects of this intervention on development, coordination and obesity prevention of the children. A very important matter of Public Health is to make achieved research data and results accessible to other researchers as well as representatives of politics and economics. *Meusel et al.* introduce a project which aims on the dissemination of Public Health data via the internet and discuss considerations concerning data features, computing architecture as well as software development.

The current issue accomplishes a number of articles related to the main topics of the Dresden conference: Information, Promotion and Training. They represent different Public Health research fields giving an insight into various developments of our discipline.

Prof. Dr. Dr. W. Kirch
President elect EUPHA
Congress Organizer