

# Haul or Harm? Unpacking the Commercial Determinants of Health

## Facilitator

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## Description

To what extent, and through which mechanisms, do commercial actors shape individual and population health? According to the WHO, just four industries are responsible for an estimated 2.7 million deaths each year in the European Region alone.

In this course, we'll take a critical look at the commercial determinants of health (CDoH): the ways in which companies, through their products, practices, and policy influence, affect health outcomes. We'll dive into evidence from sectors such as tobacco, alcohol, ultra-processed foods, and pharmaceuticals to understand how these sectors contribute directly and indirectly to preventable morbidity and mortality.

We'll also explore frameworks and tools, including *Health in All Policies* and *Health Impact Assessment* as means to develop a critical understanding of how to address commercial drivers of ill health through policy. By the end, you will have a better understanding of the ways in which commercial actors influence health and a more critical view on industry "terms and conditions".

## Objectives

- Define the concept of *commercial determinants of health* and explain its relevance to public health research and policy.
- Identify key industries and mechanisms through which commercial practices impact health outcomes.
- Apply a systems-thinking perspective to analyze commercial influences on population health.
- Critically discuss strategies for mitigating harmful commercial influences through policy, regulation, and intersectoral collaboration.

## Date

**5 November 2026, 14:00-17:00**

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level</b>                     | Basic                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Eligibility</b>               | The course is open to PhD and MD students of the SSPH+ Inter-university Graduate Campus.                                                                             |
| <b>Course Structure</b>          | Online lecture with integrated interactive sessions and real-world case discussions and opportunities for active participation, critical dialogue, and peer exchange |
| <b>Work load</b>                 | Preliminary Work: 1; Contact time: 3 h                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Credits</b>                   | (1 ECTS for active participation in 4 short online courses and 1 passed assessment in 1 course)                                                                      |
| <b>Assessment</b>                | Participants who choose this course for credit may write a short essay on a selected commercial sector (voluntary).                                                  |
| <b>Location</b>                  | Online course on zoom                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Course Fees</b>               | SSPH+ PhD and MD Students: o.- CHF                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Registration</b>              | <a href="http://www.conftool.com/ssph-phd-courses2026">http://www.conftool.com/ssph-phd-courses2026</a>                                                              |
| <b>Deadline for registration</b> | 5 October 2026                                                                                                                                                       |

This course is an SSPH+ IGC initiative to provide post-doctoral scientists at SSPH+ network institutions to teach.