

# From Ottawa to Vienna. Health promotion — post-truth contexts and times

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## Abstract

This paper concerns the events that occurred in the span of thirty years – from the 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion to the 2016 Vienna Declaration supporting it. The purpose, however, is not to discuss the substance of these events, but what should be defined as their context, in particular the political one. The text is divided into two parts relating to both of the documents mentioned, where the content of the message about health promotion formulated at that time is presented, together with the context in which it was created and received, and – briefly – its consequences. With reference to the context of the Vienna document, the issue of post-truth era will be discussed in more detail. The analyses devoted to the two parts will include addressing two problems that affect the issues under consideration: the concept of Health in All Policies and the issue of the susceptibility of various social classes to the arguments presented in health promotion programmes.

**Key words:** health promotion, health policy, health promotion programmes, policy

**Słowa kluczowe:** promocja zdrowia, polityka zdrowotna, polityka, programy zdrowotne



Ministerstwo Nauki  
i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

Przygotowanie do wydania elektronicznego finansowane w ramach umowy 641/P-DUN/2018 ze środków Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego przeznaczonych na działalność upowszechniającą naukę.

Between 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion [1] and the 2016 Vienna Declaration [2] a lot has changed – especially the socio-political context that was a contextual basis for those documents and their interpretation. The idea of addressing the context issue was inspired by a textbook published by the Canadian Public Health Association.<sup>1</sup> In the guidelines on the competencies of public health practitioners it includes, attention was drawn to the importance of the context of the undertaken activity as an environment for prolonging life, preventing diseases, etc. [3]. The context of this environment is diverse: from ethical issues (it is worth adequately identifying the values and norms in force) to other socio-cultural, economic and political determinants. Considering the current public debate, the latter become particularly significant.

Taking into account the socio-cultural changes taking place, their context translates into a political dimension, and vice versa – normalized political ideologies have a strong influence on the attitudes of people in the socio-cultural dimension.

The goal of presenting the context – especially political and ideological – is to recognize its key role in the success of many public health initiatives. It is postulated that the context influences the selection of topics considered in designing the health promotion programme, the way individual concepts and categories are perceived and interpreted, as well as the effectiveness of implementation efforts. In other words, the same verbal message can mean something completely different depending on the context, and consequently a measure that has a full