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# **WHO Public Health Report**

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## STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE AND CHARTING THE FUTURE: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 73<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE



The 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC73) was held in Astana, Kazakhstan from 24-26 October 2023. The session witnessed key addresses from the WHO Director-General and Regional Director on the global and European health landscape. Amid the backdrop of WHO's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, key resolutions focused on strengthening the health workforce, preparing for emergencies, devising a roadmap against antimicrobial resistance (AMR), an action plan for refugee and migrant health, and budgetary discussions.

Reflecting on the past year, Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, Regional Director, highlighted the multifaceted challenges Europe faced, from COVID-19 and the monkeypox outbreak to crises in Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabach and Israel, re-emergence of polio, and climate challenges.

An international conference on primary health care (PHC) was co-hosted by WHO/Europe, the Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan, and UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia before RC73. This conference marked 45 years since the significant Declaration of Alma-Ata and 5 years since the Astana Declaration, both underscoring the paramount role of PHC globally. Kazakhstan's President, H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, extolled the 1978 Declaration of Alma-Ata and shared Kazakhstan's significant advancements in healthcare over the past decade.

The Regional Director's message centered on the theme of resilience, segmented into three pillars: resilient governance, health systems, and people. Dr Kluge emphasized participatory governance, the significance of a strong health workforce, and peace as a foundational element for resilience.

Governance and budgetary matters were addressed on the second day. The Regional Committee also looked at the WHO/Europe's first Topline Accountability Report, which assessed its operations and resources.

Member States endorsed vital action plans at the session, including a framework for the health and care workforce and a roadmap against AMR, with the latter spotlighted as a global threat. A new strategy for health emergency preparedness was introduced, and a new action plan for refugee and migrant health for 2023-2030 was adopted.

Concluding RC73, it was decided that the next session would be in Copenhagen, Denmark. Dr Kluge encapsulated the session's spirit, emphasizing the necessity for resilient governance, health systems, and people in these tumultuous times.

The full report and more about the Regional Committee on: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/30-10-2023-73rd-session-of-the-who-regional-committee-for-europe-draws-to-a-close-with-a-clear-focus-on-resilience-amid-ongoing-challenges-and-crises> and <https://www.who.int/europe/about-us/governance/regional-committee/73rd-session-of-the-who-regional-committee-for-europe>.

## TOWARDS A RESILIENT REGION – ADDRESS BY THE WHO REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE AT THE 73<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

*Dear President of the Regional Committee, my very good friend Minister Azhar Giniyat, my big brother Dr Tedros, ministers, ladies and gentlemen,*

*What a pleasure to see all of you back in person, one year after the formidable Regional Committee we had in Tel Aviv in Israel. I want to say a very big thank you, toda raba, particularly to my friend Dr Ashi Salomon, the man who arranged everything from the big vision to the smallest transport detail.*

*No doubt this Regional Committee will be as memorable as last year. It is taking place in the country where, 45 years ago, the most significant pages of WHO's history and contemporary public health were written through the Alma-Ata Declaration on primary health care.*

*And there are many more celebrations to have. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care, the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tallinn Charter on Health Systems for Health and Wealth, 25 years of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, and, of course, 75 years of our Organization, the World Health Organization. It has been a year of commemorating key historical moments to improve health and health systems in the Region and beyond.*

*Sadly, 2023 has also been a year when health crises have continued to rage through our Region: a devastating war in Ukraine, with now more than 1700 child casualties; two major earthquakes in Türkiye; a mass population movement from Karabakh to Armenia, compounded by an explosion at the gas station with many people burned, where immediately we provided assistance; and now hundreds and hundreds of children being killed in the war in Israel and Gaza. Just like Dr Tedros, at WHO/Europe we strongly condemn the atrocious, unjustified attacks by Hamas on the innocent Israeli people. We call for the immediate release of all hostages which were taken into Gaza, many of them elderly people and children, who are in need of medical care. We call upon all parties to engage under the rules of international humanitarian law, particularly protecting citizens and health-care workers.*

*The WHO European Region, my friends, is no longer the disaster-resilient region that we believed it was. Yes, we learned a lot of lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, from successfully controlling mpox and moving towards elimination, from swiftly controlling the polio outbreaks thanks to the political commitment of the governments of Tajikistan, Israel and Ukraine – but we just cannot let our guard go down.*

The meeting introduced the three pillars of a resilient WHO European Region: **governance, health systems, and people.**

The full speech is available at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHXL1WdvCpg&ab\\_channel=WHORegionalOfficeforEurope](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHXL1WdvCpg&ab_channel=WHORegionalOfficeforEurope).

## WHO/EUROPE'S 53 MEMBER STATES ADOPT HISTORIC RESOLUTION TO PROTECT AND SUPPORT HEALTH AND CARE WORKERS ACROSS EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Representatives from 53 countries gathered at the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in Astana, Kazakhstan, have unanimously adopted a resolution in support of the Framework for action on the health and care workforce in the WHO European Region, covering the years 2023 to 2030.

The Framework comes at a critical time when all countries in the Region are struggling to retain and recruit sufficient numbers of health and care workers with the right mix of skills

to meet the growing and changing needs of patients. The resolution acts as a foundation to help fix this health workforce crisis and will see WHO/Europe supporting governments in the Region as they implement it over the coming years.

*“This is an important day for the millions of health and care workers living in our Region, as the unanimous adoption of this resolution demonstrates,”* said WHO Regional Director for Europe, Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge. *“This high-level political commitment shows that countries are ready to put into action concrete measures that will tackle the health workforce crisis and build workplaces where health workers are valued, respected and protected.”*

The new Framework sets out 5 key actions that countries can take to protect and support their health and care workers.

- 1) Retain and recruit.
- 2) Build supply.
- 3) Optimize performance.
- 4) Plan
- 5) Invest.

[Framework for action on the health and care workforce in the WHO European Region 2023–2030](#)

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/26-10-2023-who-europe-53-member-states-adopt-historic-resolution-to-protect-and-support-health-and-care-workers-across-europe-and-central-asia>.

### Newly adopted resolution is a tool for countries to tackle the health workforce crisis

Following the historic adoption of a resolution at the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in Astana, Kazakhstan, Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe has issued a comment in *The Lancet* outlining the five factors causing the current health workforce crisis, together with the five actions needed to overcome it.

Written together with colleagues from WHO/Europe, the article explains how the newly adopted Framework for Action prioritizes the need to retain and recruit health workers to tackle the crisis, outlining policy actions to improve the working conditions of health and care workers to reverse the labour, mental health and gender equality crises.

The authors remain optimistic that if actions are taken now to transform the European Region's health workforce, its health systems can become stronger, more resilient and more able to meet the growing and changing needs of patients.

Europe is grappling with a complex health workforce crisis. The continent finds it hard to maintain and recruit health and care workers. Reasons range from an ageing workforce, where in 13 countries over 40% of doctors are above 55, to a 62% increase in resignations during COVID-19, the tragic loss of roughly 50,000 health workers during the pandemic, and a surge in worker migration post-COVID.

Additionally, more than half of health workers report burnout, with many suffering from heightened stress, anxiety, and depression due to intensified workloads during and after the pandemic. Educational institutions across Europe are not adequately equipping future health professionals, particularly in emerging fields like digital health. A gender disparity persists: women represent 75% of the health workforce but face a 24% pay gap, worse working conditions, higher rates of workplace harassment, and limited leadership roles compared to men. Financially, the sector has yet to recover from post-2008 cuts to health budgets and worker salaries. Although the COVID-19 crisis emphasized the need for increased healthcare investment, current economic challenges, including wars and inflation, are obstructing essential sector funding.

The full text is available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762\(23\)00184-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762(23)00184-9/fulltext).



## UNLOCKING HEALTH FOR ALL



Investments focusing on individual well-being are essential to achieving comprehensive health and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Europe is making strides towards well-being economies, a concept amplified by current challenges from health inequities to climate crises.

Charles Dickens emphasized the transformative power of science. Today, we understand the impact of social settings on health disparities. Addressing the principle of 'mattering' is central to the SDGs, especially in reducing inequalities within and among countries (SDG 10) and ensuring healthy lives and promoting overall well-being for all at all ages (SDG 3). The World Health Organization (WHO), however, highlights expanding health inequities in Europe, with 600,000 excess deaths between 2019 and 2023 due to underfunded health systems and diminished trust in government policies.

81% of Europeans advocate for reducing such inequities. WHO identifies five key measures: supporting youth, enhancing social and health security, involving communities in decision-making, equitable green and digital transitions, and fair health resource distribution.

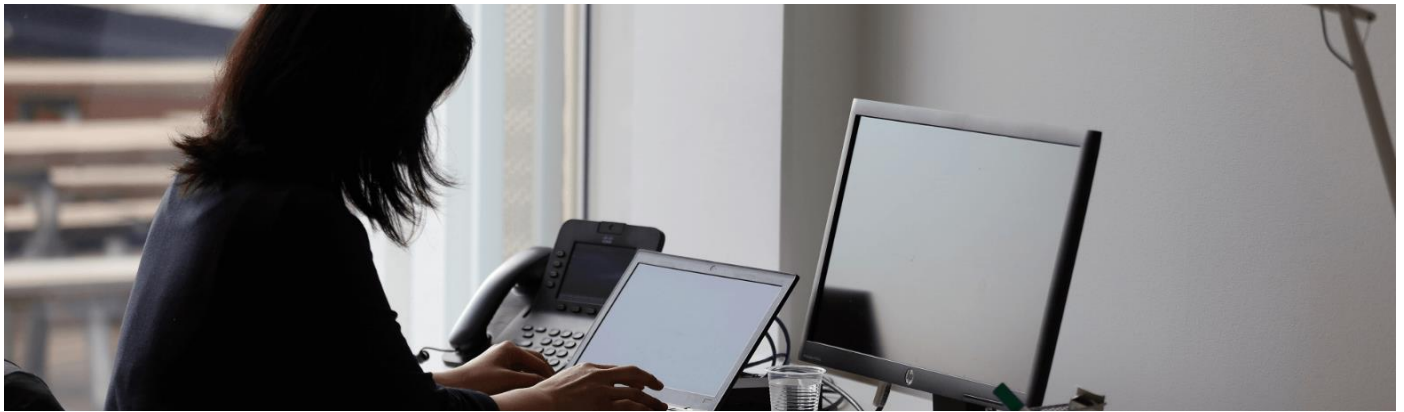
Countries such as Iceland have demonstrated the benefits of prioritizing well-being, with impressive economic outcomes post the 2008 financial crisis. Many nations are now considering well-being indicators beyond just GDP.

Addressing health disparities could potentially save the EU nearly €1 trillion in preventable welfare losses each year. Better health not only boosts individual well-being but also strengthens economies. Collaborative efforts, like the 2023 joint venture between the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Bank of Italy, underline this synergy.

The objective is clear: societies where individuals prosper, contribute, and are valued. Achieving this requires innovative fiscal tools and genuine public participation in decision-making. As challenges mount, integrating well-being and health into investments is no longer optional but imperative. With determined efforts, prioritizing people, and focusing on holistic health, the broader SDGs are within reach.

The full text is available at: <https://www.globalgovernanceproject.org/unlocking-health-for-all/hans-henri-p-kluge/>.

## NEW WHO GUIDE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES HIGHLIGHTS BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR WORKPLACES



WHO/Europe has released a guide to promote health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the WHO European Region. Sedentary work environments contribute to over 10,000 preventable deaths annually. Unlike large corporations, SMEs, which make up 99% of all businesses in the EU, often lack resources for comprehensive physical activity programmes. Yet, the new guide leverages SMEs' inherent flexibility.

Extended sedentary periods are linked to severe health issues like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which account for 90% of all deaths in the WHO European Region. The EU's 2022 Special Eurobarometer reported that 45% of EU citizens never engage in sports or exercise. Furthermore, the Eurobarometer data shows that:

- 44% of Europeans sit between 2.5 and 5.5 hours daily.
- Nearly 40% sit even longer, with 11% sitting over 8.5 hours and 28% between 5.5 and 8.5 hours.
- White collar workers, managers, students, and the unemployed are more likely to sit for over 8.5 hours compared to manual workers.

This guide commences the dialogue on enhancing the health of workers in SMEs. Current guidelines largely target individuals or sizable firms. The guide's adoption by SMEs can lead to a symbiotic relationship between health and work, potentially reducing sick days and employee turnover. WHO Europe emphasizes that transitioning to a healthier workplace is both vital and achievable.

[Promotion of health-enhancing physical activity in small-to-medium-sized enterprises.](#)

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/30-10-2023-physical-activity-benefits-workplaces-highlights-new-who-guide-for-small-and-medium-businesses>.



## THE BEATING HEART OF OUR REGION: WHO EUROPEAN REGION CALLS ON MEMBER STATES TO DEVELOP PREPAREDNESS 2.0



Speaking at the session on Preparedness 2.0 at the Regional Committee in Astana, WHO Regional Emergency Director for Europe Dr Gerald Rockenschaub called on countries to actively engage in further consultations to collectively develop the priorities for a new 2023–2029 Strategy and Action plan on health emergency preparedness, response and resilience in the WHO European Region. Known as Preparedness 2.0, it will support countries to develop fit-for-purpose national health emergency preparedness and response plans through an all-hazards and One Health approach.

The Preparedness 2.0 strategy builds on a broad range of recommendations, experiences and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies across the Region. In support of the WHO Secretariat, a Preparedness 2.0 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has been established to provide evidence-based guidance on priority areas for consideration by the WHO European Region Member States.

*“At this early stage of its remit, the Preparedness 2.0 TAG proposes three key messages. First, Preparedness 2.0 must take an all-hazards approach to consider the range of potential threats the Region might face. Second, given the uncertainty as to what the next health emergency might be, there must be an integrated One Health approach throughout the strategy and action plan to ensure joined-up thinking between human, animal, and environmental challenges. Third, the principle of equity must run throughout Preparedness 2.0,”* explained Preparedness 2.0 TAG Co-Chair Dr Gail Carson during the session.

[Health emergency preparedness, response and resilience in the WHO European Region 2024–2029.](#)

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/26-10-2023-the-beating-heart-of-our-region--who-european-region-calls-on-member-states-to-develop-preparedness-2.0>.

## COUNTRIES IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION COMMIT TO ACTION ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE BY ENDORSING A NEW EUROPEAN ROADMAP



Health ministers and delegates from WHO/Europe's 53 Member States have endorsed the new European Roadmap on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which supports countries in the WHO European Region to identify, prioritize and implement high-impact interventions to tackle AMR.

Meeting on 26 October 2023 at the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, ministers and delegates made the commitment to action using this practical and adaptable approach. The Roadmap

sets out 53 interventions, from which countries can make selections according to national context, public health priorities and cultural considerations.

The interventions set out in the Roadmap range from traditional measures, such as improving hygiene and vaccination, to using whole genome sampling to improve environmental surveillance. WHO/Europe experts will provide technical guidance and support with capacity-building.

### AMR – a global concern that needs local action

AMR is a global concern for both human and animal health and was associated with the deaths of some 500 000 people in the Region in 2019. AMR is accelerated by the misuse and overuse of antimicrobial medicines. Today, resistant pathogens are spreading ever more rapidly because of factors such as environmental pollution and global travel and trade.

Although progress has been made, more resources are needed. Almost all Member States of the Region have made national action plans on AMR, but only 25% of them have been funded.

The Roadmap approach:

- takes into account the whole health system, fostering broad partnerships and alliances while maintaining a people-centred point of view;
- promotes sharing resources, data and knowledge between Member States;
- calls for increased investment in One Health, founded on bold policies that span multiple sectors to generate better data, deepen scientific understanding and get ahead of current and future threats; and
- integrates public health considerations into environmental and developmental policies to improve community health and resilience in the future.

[Roadmap on antimicrobial resistance for the WHO European Region 2023–2030](#)

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/26-10-2023-countries-in-the-who-european-region-commit-to-action-on-antimicrobial-resistance-by-endorsing-a-new-european-roadmap>.

## WITH THE COLDER MONTHS UPON US, WHO/EUROPE LAUNCHES NEW PLATFORMS TO TRACK AND SHARE REAL-TIME DATA ON RESPIRATORY VIRUSES

As winter approaches, Europe and central Asia are witnessing a rise in COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory viruses. To address this, WHO/Europe has initiated a campaign against the combined threat of these viruses.

SARS-CoV-2, along with other respiratory viruses such as influenzavirus and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), continues to pose significant health concerns. WHO/Europe is adapting its approach for joint surveillance of these infections, factoring in changes in testing and reporting methods across nations. Data interpretation now leans more on sentinel surveillance in healthcare settings and wastewater monitoring, which give insights into transmission rates, disease severity, and virus evolution.

Other metrics, such as ICU occupancy, hospital bed occupancy, and overall mortality rates across age brackets, aid countries in strategic planning. In line with these adaptations, WHO/Europe and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) have introduced the European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary (ERVISS). This platform integrates data on influenza, COVID-19, and RSV in the WHO European Region.

ERVISS also complements the new WHO/Europe COVID-19 Information and Data Hub, providing current health info and datasets related to COVID-19.

Dr Richard Pebody of WHO/Europe elaborated on this shift, highlighting the transition from pandemic-focused surveillance to a sustainable, integrated model combining COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses. ERVISS aims to monitor infection trends, track disease severity, observe virus evolution, and eventually replace three prior regional platforms: Flu News Europe, WHO/Europe Weekly COVID-19 Bulletin, and the COVID-19 Situation dashboard.

The ERVISS system objectives are to:

- monitor the intensity, geographical spread and temporal patterns of influenza, COVID-19 and other respiratory virus infections to inform optimal mitigation measures;
- keep track of severity and risk factors for severe disease, and assess the impact on health-care systems of these infections to inform mitigation measures;
- observe changes and characteristics of circulating and emerging respiratory viruses, particularly virological changes in influenza viruses, SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses, to inform the development of treatments, drugs and vaccines; and
- replace three existing regional products: Flu News Europe, the WHO/Europe Weekly COVID-19 Surveillance Bulletin, and the COVID-19 Situation in the WHO European Region dashboard.

[WHE Regional Office for Europe COVID-19 IMST information and data hub](#)

[ERVISS European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary](#)

More on this here: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/25-10-2023-who-europe-launches-new-platforms-to-track-and-share-real-time-data-on-respiratory-viruses>

## UNLOCKING THE FUTURE OF HEALTHY AGEING: THE LISBON OUTCOME STATEMENT



Through a landmark statement, participants of the Regional Summit for Policy Innovation on Healthy Ageing are calling for action to advance and promote healthy ageing across the WHO European Region.

*"Today, we embark on a journey towards a future where healthy ageing is not merely an aspiration but a concrete reality. The Lisbon Outcome Statement is a blueprint of our commitment, urging us to forge a future where every individual and every community thrives,"* declared Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, in his opening video-recorded statement at the Summit, which took place in Lisbon on 10-11 October 2023.

The Statement supports the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing by emphasizing the need to support older people in staying active and healthy, being included in society, and by creating age-friendly environments.

The Statement highlights five key priorities to advance healthy ageing policies including:

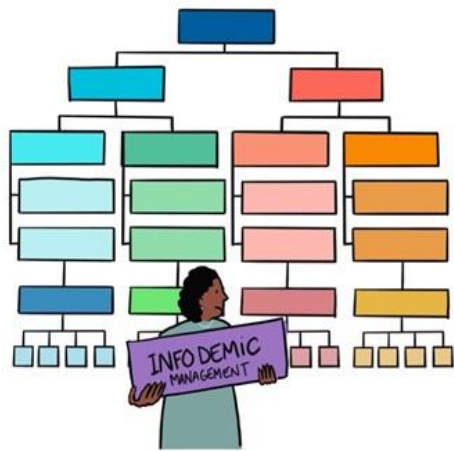
- I. preventive measures, which focus on preventing health issues and promoting physical, social, and mental well-being throughout life;
- II. enabling continuous support, by providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality care throughout a person's life, and adapting to changing needs and across different care settings, including long-term care;
- III. age-friendly environments, by creating communities and cities that empower people of all ages to engage in community life;
- IV. leveraging older people's potential, by recognizing and utilizing the valuable contributions and expertise of older people; and
- V. data and evidence, which ensures that policy decisions are informed by evidence-based practices.

*"As we move forward, the Statement will serve as a valuable reference and source of inspiration for policy-makers, practitioners, and advocates dedicated to improving the quality of life for older adults,"* shared Dr Yongjie Yon, Technical Officer on Ageing and Health. *"By working together and embracing innovative approaches, we can unlock the potential for healthy ageing, ensuring that current and future generations of older persons can enjoy the well-deserved benefits of a long and fulfilling life."*

[Lisbon Outcome Statement: Regional summit on policy innovation for healthy ageing in the WHO European Region](#)

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/21-10-2023-unlocking-the-future-of-healthy-ageing-the-lisbon-outcome-statement>.

# NEW INFODEMIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS TO SUPPORT PANDEMIC PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA AND RESPIRATORY PATHOGEN DISEASE EVENTS



A new public health taxonomy for social listening on respiratory pathogens has been released alongside other useful tools for infodemic management.

The public health taxonomy for social listening provides a structure allowing an analyst to align data to a search strategy to better understand how the public conversation is changing in relation to a public health topic of interest. A taxonomy can help organize and map information to support identification of infodemic insights. Public health taxonomies for social listening have been developed and implemented by WHO for COVID-19 and for mpox.

Now, in-line with the new WHO Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET) initiative that focuses on pathogens transmitted via respiratory means, a new taxonomy has been developed for social listening on respiratory pathogens. This taxonomy takes a broad view, encompassing viral, bacterial and fungal pathogens across the five taxonomy topic areas of the cause, illness, intervention, treatments and information. The new report details the development of the taxonomy and provides advice for analysts looking to incorporate it into their work.

This taxonomy adds to other recent tools produced by the WHO infodemic management team to support pandemic planning including OpenWHO training modules on taxonomy development and other infodemic topics, the WHO/UNICEF How to build an infodemic insights report in six steps, and a new respiratory pathogen portal on WHO Early AI-Powered Social Listening Tool (EARS) platform.

The WHO EARS platform was launched in December 2020 to help to understand public concern during the pandemic. The platform uses a public health taxonomy to categorise content from online sources such as social media, news articles and blogs, and presents it in real-time. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, over 100 million posts were analysed, allowing infodemic managers, health authorities and analysts insight into public conversation's, concerns and misinformation to help inform the response.

[Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats \(PRET\) initiative](#)

[Open WHO training modules](#)

[WHO/UNICEF How to build an infodemic insights report in 6 steps](#)

[WHO Early AI-Powered Social Listening Tool \(EARS\)](#)

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/25-10-2023-new-infodemic-management-tools-to-support-pandemic-planning-and-preparedness-for-pandemic-influenza-and-respiratory-pathogen-disease-events>.



## ON WORLD CITIES DAY 2023, WHO CALLS FOR INCREASED FINANCING FOR A SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY URBAN FUTURE FOR ALL



World Cities Day, designated by the United Nations, is celebrated on 31 October 2023 and serves as an opportunity to promote sustainable urban development around the world.

In the context of the current global economic downturn, World Cities Day 2023 focuses on increasing public investment to finance urban development. With numerous converging global crises, it is critical to find more sustainable and innovative ways of financing the health and well-being of the 55% of the world's population living in urban settings.

This theme resonates with WHO's broader effort to provide strategic advice for urban health decision-making by Member States. Without substantial financing from public budgets and other sources, there can be no effective urban health action. This point is articulated in the first of a series of four new policy briefs from WHO to support countries to strategically implement policies and practices that towards improved urban health. *Governance and Financing* provides guidance on how cities and national governments can ensure that action on urban health has sufficient and diverse resource allocation, encompassing both public budgets and alternative funding sources, and exploring opportunities to grow urban health budgets and to meet urban dwellers' needs.

The second policy brief launched today is on *Generating and working with evidence*. To take effective action on urban health, decision-makers need a full, clear picture of the state of health and well-being of their urban constituents. Robust evidence for urban health risk factors and impacts supports priority-setting, investment decisions, monitoring of policy and practice, and identify emerging problems. Key to having this evidence is collecting, analysing and using data: the brief provides guidance on adopting an effective indicator system and choosing relevant indicators, drawing on diverse data types and sources. The two remaining policy briefs in this series, on *Participation and partnership* and *Innovation* will be launched before the end of the year.

The new policy briefs will be relevant to many cities, including those in the Partnership for Healthy Cities, a global network of cities committed to saving lives by preventing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and injuries. On World Cities Day this year, three new cities – Nairobi, Kenya, New York, United States and Osaka, Japan – will join the network, working alongside over 70 other major cities to improve the health of their inhabitants.

[World Cities Day.](#)

[Partnership for Healthy Cities.](#)

[Urban Health.](#)

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/31-10-2023-on-world-cities-day-2023--who-calls-for-increased-financing--for-a-sustainable--healthy-urban-future-for-all>.



## CALL FOR WHO'S FIFTH HEALTH FOR ALL FILM FESTIVAL OPENS TO AMPLIFY VOICES OF CHAMPIONS OF HEALTH



The World Health Organization (WHO) calls for submissions of short films for its 2024 Health for All Film Festival. Now in its fifth year, the Festival is an annual opportunity for health champions and advocates to raise their voices and tell stories of people facing various health issues and challenges.

Two topics will be highlighted in this next edition: the health of migrants and refugees, leaving their homes because of wars, disasters, climate change, or other reasons; and physical activities as a means of staying healthy.

The regular three “Grand Prix” will also be awarded, one for each category aligned with WHO’s major global public health goals: universal health coverage, providing support in health emergencies, and better health and well-being. Films submitted in all of these categories should not exceed eight minutes.

There will also be two special prizes: one for a student-produced film, and one for a very short film (of 1-3 minutes).

The call opened on 1 November 2023 and the deadline for submissions is on 31 January 2024.

More information is available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/30-10-2023-call-for-who-s-fifth-health-for-all-film-festival-opens-to-amplify-voices-of-champions-of-health>.

## HEALTH TOPICS

### Climate change

The global climate is changing. This affects human health, well-being and life on earth. In the near future it will lead to an amplification of current health problems, as well as new risks and pressures for the environment and the social and economic determinants of health.

[https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/climate-change#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/climate-change#tab=tab_1)

### Digital health

Digital health is the field of knowledge and practice associated with the development and use of digital technologies to improve health. Digital health expands the concept of eHealth to include digital consumers, with a wider range of smart devices and connected equipment. The following areas are commonly understood as being part of, or related to, digital health: artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain, health data, health information systems, the infodemic, the Internet of Things, interoperability and telemedicine.

[https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/digital-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/digital-health#tab=tab_1)

### Mental health

Mental health should be seen as a valued source of human capital or well-being in society. It contributes to individual and population health, happiness and welfare, enables social interaction, cohesion and security, and feeds national output and labour force productivity. We need good mental health to succeed in all areas of life.

Yet, individuals with mental ill-health are often shunned and denied access to care, with services for promoting and protecting mental health and preventing ill-health often starved of resources. It is vital to not only address the needs of people with defined mental disorders but also to protect and promote the mental health of all people, and recognize the intrinsic value of positive mental health.

[https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab_1)

### Vaccines and immunization

Immunization is one of the most cost-effective ways to save lives and promote good health and well-being throughout the life course. Every year, vaccines save millions of lives, and millions more people are protected from disease and disability. By preventing many serious early-childhood infectious diseases, like polio and measles, immunization helps children grow into healthy adults. Other vaccines given early in life help prevent liver and cervical cancer many years later, and vaccination of older adults protects them from influenza, COVID-19 and other serious diseases.

The WHO European Region has made great progress in recent decades on many of these fronts, but there are still gaps in vaccination coverage that put especially the most vulnerable at risk. Access to vaccines, including against human papillomavirus and SARS-CoV2, is also not equitable within and among countries.

[https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab_1)

## WHO EMERGENCIES

### Health emergencies list

The health emergencies list details the disease outbreaks, disasters and humanitarian crises where WHO plays an essential role in supporting countries to respond to and recover from emergencies with public health consequences.

[Health supplies and the Gaza Strip](#)

[COVID-19](#)

[Earthquakes in Afghanistan](#)

[Syria](#)

## WHO CAMPAIGNS

### World Diabetes Day – Access to Diabetes Care; 14 November 2023

World Diabetes Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness of diabetes as a global public health issue and what needs to be done, collectively and individually, for better prevention, diagnosis and management of the condition.

This World Diabetes Day, WHO will highlight the need for equitable access to essential care, including raising awareness of ways people with diabetes can minimize their risk of complications. Activities will also celebrate the experiences of people with all forms of diabetes to help those impacted to take action, including seeking and obtaining essential care.

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-diabetes-day/2023>

### Cervical Cancer Elimination Day of Action – Marking three years of the movement to eliminate cervical cancer; 17 November 2023

In 2020, 194 countries resolved to eliminate a cancer for the first time and [WHO launched the Global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem](#).

This historic response to the [WHO Director-General's call to action in 2018](#) catalysed a social movement and sparked an annual tradition, bringing communities across the world together for a Day of Action for Cervical Cancer Elimination.

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/cervical-cancer-elimination-day-of-action/2023>

# WHO PUBLICATIONS

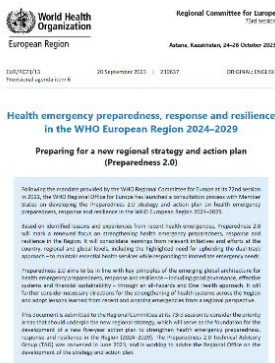
## Promotion of health-enhancing physical activity in small-to-medium-sized enterprises



Promoting physical activity in the workplace provides substantial health and wellbeing benefits, as well as enhancing productivity and job satisfaction. Stablishing and implementing physical activity programs within Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is often challenging due to the diverse needs and limitations in specific workplace contexts. This publication highlights the importance of promoting physical activity in the workplace and aims to provide evidence-based, practical and context-specific guidance and tools for SMEs to design and implement effective workplace physical activity programs, which will contribute in developing a culture of health that encourage both physical and mental well-being among all employees.

<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/373629>

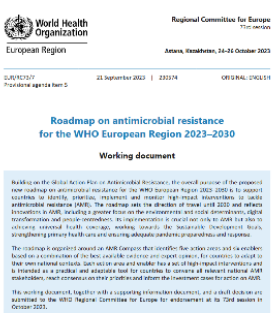
## Seventy-third Regional Committee for Europe: Astana, 24-26 October 2023: health emergency preparedness, response and resilience in the WHO European Region 2024–2029



Preparedness 2.0 aims to be in line with key principles of the emerging global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response and resilience – including good governance, effective systems and financial sustainability – through an all-hazards and One Health approach. It will further consider necessary directions for the strengthening of health systems across the Region and adopt lessons learned from recent and ongoing emergencies from a regional perspective.

<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/372629>

## Seventy-third Regional Committee for Europe: Astana, 24-26 October 2023: roadmap on antimicrobial resistance for the WHO European Region 2023–2030

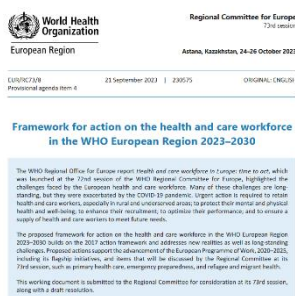


Building on the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, the overall purpose of the proposed new roadmap on antimicrobial resistance for the WHO European Region 2023–2030 is to support countries to identify, prioritize, implement and monitor high-impact interventions to tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The roadmap sets the direction of travel until 2030 and reflects innovations in AMR, including a greater focus on the environmental and social determinants, digital transformation and people-centredness. Its implementation is crucial not only to AMR but also to achieving universal health coverage, working towards the Sustainable Development Goals, strengthening primary health care and ensuring adequate pandemic preparedness and response.

The roadmap is organized around an AMR Compass that identifies five action areas and six enablers based on a combination of the best available evidence and expert opinion, for countries to adapt to their own national contexts. Each action area and enabler have a set of high-impact interventions and is intended as a practical and adaptable tool for countries to convene all relevant national AMR stakeholders, reach consensus on their priorities and inform the investment cases for action on AMR.

<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/372503>

### Seventy-third Regional Committee for Europe: Astana, 24-26 October 2023: framework for action on the health and care workforce in the WHO European Region 2023–2030



The WHO Regional Office for Europe report Health and care workforce in Europe: time to act, which was launched at the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, highlighted the challenges faced by the European health and care workforce. Many of these challenges are long-standing, but they were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Urgent action is required to retain health and care workers, especially in rural and underserved areas; to protect their mental and physical health and well-being; to enhance their recruitment; to optimize their performance; and to ensure a supply of health and care workers to meet future needs.

The proposed framework for action on the health and care workforce in the WHO European Region 2023–2030 builds on the 2017 action framework and addresses new realities as well as long-standing challenges. Proposed actions support the advancement of the European Programme of Work, 2020–2025, including its flagship initiatives, and items that will be discussed by the Regional Committee at its 73<sup>rd</sup> session, such as primary health care, emergency preparedness, and refugee and migrant health.

<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/372563>

### Lisbon Outcome Statement: Regional summit on policy innovation for healthy ageing in the WHO European Region



**Lisbon Outcome Statement: Regional summit on policy innovation for healthy ageing in the WHO European Region**  
10–11 October 2023  
Lisbon, Portugal

During the “Regional summit on policy innovation for healthy ageing in the WHO European”, hosted by World Health Organization (WHO) Europe in Lisbon, Portugal, on 10-11 October 2023, the Lisbon Outcome Statement was launched. The Statement acts as a concise guide, encapsulating the key priorities and actions outlined during the Regional Summit, identifying key areas for work to ensure a good quality of life for older people. It advocates a life-course approach to healthy ageing, noting the importance of embedding development and maintenance of functional abilities. Furthermore, it recognises the diverse capacities and life experiences of older adults, whilst noting the need to address persistent inequities tied to socioeconomic status, gender, disability, ethnicity and other social determinants of health.



<https://www.who.int/europe/publications/m/item/lisbon-outcome-statement>

## WHO STORIES

### **What it is like to be a spousal carer – perspectives from two women from Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

*“My caring role isn't so much task-driven. Kevin can do all the things like brushing his teeth, getting dressed, everything like that. It's Kevin's spatial awareness that's mixed up so there are lots of little dangers that he needs me to look out for and support him with.”*

Helena, from Kanturk, Ireland, is married to Kevin (60), who was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia, a degenerative disease of the brain that affects behaviour, cognition, movement and the regulation of automatic bodily functions, seven years ago. [...]

<https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/feature-stories/item/what-it-is-like-to-be-a-spousal-carer---perspectives-from-2-women-from-ireland-and-the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland>

### **"The situation is critical." Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) caring for severely burned refugees shoulder to shoulder with Armenian doctors**

On Monday 25 September 2023, as thousands of refugees were moving towards Armenia from Karabakh region, a powerful explosion at a fuel storage depot killed more than 200 people and seriously injured more than 300. To support the ongoing care of burns survivors, WHO/Europe activated an Emergency Medical Teams Coordination Cell (EMTCC) under the leadership of the Ministry of Health of Armenia. Care teams specializing in burns management from several countries were quick to arrive and have been working alongside Armenian medical staff to care for the exceptionally high number of burns patients, from the early treatment stages through to rehabilitation.

[https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/feature-stories/item/the-situation-is-critical.--emergency-medical-teams-\(emts\)-caring-for-severely-burned-refugees-shoulder-to-shoulder-with-armenian-doctors](https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/feature-stories/item/the-situation-is-critical.--emergency-medical-teams-(emts)-caring-for-severely-burned-refugees-shoulder-to-shoulder-with-armenian-doctors)

## WHO PODCASTS

### **Episode #106 - Why should you care about Data?**

Why should you care about data? what can data do for you? How does WHO work with data? Dr Samira Asma explains how data works to protect your health in Science in 5.

<https://www.who.int/podcasts/episode/science-in-5/episode--106---why-should-you-care-about-data>



## The Fourth Dimension - Digital Transformation for Quality Care

In the third episode of The Fourth Dimension, we discuss with Dr Henrique Martinshow digital health can be a significant enabler to achieve health goals, improve quality of care, as well as promote and safeguard health equality. Also, we look into how the WHO Athens Office for Quality of Care and Patient Safety can support Member States and stakeholders towards achieving these goals.

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2180367/13879236-digital-transformation-for-quality-care>

## WHO COURSES

### FAO, WHO, and WOAHA launch new online course on joint response to zoonotic disease outbreaks

Zoonotic diseases can have far-reaching impacts on the health of people, animals, environments, economies and health systems globally. A multidisciplinary and multisectoral collaboration, through a One Health approach is required to effectively prepare for, detect, assess, and respond to emerging and endemic zoonotic diseases. However, during outbreaks of zoonosis, countries usually have limited time to organise the response.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/31-10-2023-fao--who--and-woaha-launch-new-online-course-on-joint-response-to-zoonotic-disease-outbreaks>

Register here: [Response Preparedness for Zoonotic Disease Outbreaks Using a One-Health Approach OpenWHO](#).

## WHO EVENTS

### WHO at the World Conference for Sexual Health; 2-5 November 2023

Sexual health and wellbeing is fundamental to a person's health throughout their life. It is not just about the absence of illness, but it's also about a positive, respectful approach to sexuality and relationships.

From 2-5 November 2023 at the 26<sup>th</sup> Congress of the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS), experts from the World Health Organization and the UN's Special Programme on Human Reproduction ([HRP](#)) will present research and advancements in sexual health within the theme of Bridging the gaps: Sexual health, rights, justice and pleasure for all.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/11/02/default-calendar/who-at-the-world-conference-for-sexual-health>

### Youth and alcohol: do new trends demand new solutions? 7 November 2023

Alcohol consumption among young people (15–19-year-olds) carries significant health risks and no benefits. Drinking among young people may appear to have little changed over the past two decades globally. However, this trend masks

substantial changes at the country and regional levels. For example, alcohol consumption among youth appears to be decreasing in North America and Europe. Still, there is greater variability in trends in WHO South-East Asia, Africa and the Western Pacific regions, including areas of increasing youth consumption.

This webinar explores trends related to youth alcohol consumption according to the latest available data. Different hypotheses for these patterns will be tested to understand their root causes in various settings, including educational environments, online (digital) settings and the home environment. Different population-level policy interventions to influence alcogenic environments will also be explored, building upon the dialogue initiated in the second edition of the Less Alcohol Webinar series on reducing exposure to alcogenic environments.

Joining this event requires prior registration. Visit the registration link [here](#). If you have questions regarding how to attend, don't hesitate to contact the Less Alcohol Unit for more information: [lessalcohol@who.int](mailto:lessalcohol@who.int).

<https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/11/07/default-calendar/youth-and-alcohol--do-new-trends-demand-new-solutions>

**28<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Regions for Health Network – “Health for all: addressing challenges, sharing experiences”**; 15-17 November 2023, Seville, Spain

WHO/Europe's Regions for Health Network (RHN) is set to host its 28<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Seville, Spain from 15-17 November 2023. Founded in 1992, RHN serves as a collaborative platform for over 30 regions, numerous partners, and Member States of the WHO European Region. Its mission is to foster better health and well-being for all, ensure universal access to quality care, safeguard against health emergencies, and leverage science, data, and innovation. The upcoming meeting in Andalusia, one of RHN's earliest members, will focus on "**Health for all: addressing challenges, sharing experiences**".

More on [Regions for Health Network \(RHN\)](#).

<https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/events/item/2023/11/15/default-calendar/28th-annual-meeting-of-the-regions-for-health-network----health-for-all--addressing-challenges--sharing-experiences>

**COP28 Health Pavilion**; 30 November-12 December 2023, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

WHO in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust and partners will host the Health Pavilion at the COP28 UN Climate Conference, taking place in Dubai, UAE, from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

The COP28 Health Pavilion will convene the global health community and key stakeholders across various sectors to ensure health and equity are placed at the centre of climate negotiations. It will offer a rich two-week programme of events showcasing evidence, initiatives and solutions to maximize the health benefits of tackling climate change across regions, sectors and communities.

The [call for side events at the COP28 Health Pavilion](#) is open until 15 September 2023.

## WHO VIDEOS

Latest videos:

**Innovate, Invest, Implement for universal health coverage**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIMW4bzfVGs>

**Tobacco cessation: Quitters Diaries - Season 2 - Tomislav from Bosnia - Episode 2**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpEkbPyL\\_DM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpEkbPyL_DM)

Check out our official video channel on YouTube for the latest video news on our work from around the globe:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/who/playlists>.

## SOURCES

- <https://www.who.int/>
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- <https://www.thelancet.com/>

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