



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

**Twentieth Standing Committee
of the Regional Committee for Europe**

First session

Malta, 13 September 2012

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Report

Introduction

1. The Twentieth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its first session at the Hilton Hotel in St Julian's, Malta on 13 September 2012, the last day of the sixty-second session of the Regional Committee (RC62). The outgoing Chairperson of the Nineteenth SCRC welcomed the new members from Austria, Finland, Israel and the Republic of Moldova, and thanked Norway for agreeing to act as the link between the Executive Board and the SCRC in the coming year.

Reflections on the sixty-second session of the Regional Committee

2. In her introductory remarks, the Regional Director acknowledged the vitally important role played by the SCRC in preparing sessions of the Regional Committee. The outgoing Chairperson believed that the Standing Committee and the Secretariat had succeeded in making RC62 attractive to ministers, thanks to a number of very substantive and important agenda items. Members of the SCRC considered that the Regional Committee's adoption of the Health 2020 policy framework and strategy and of action plans on public health and on healthy ageing in Europe represented highly significant milestones for the WHO European Region. The panel discussion in plenary had been successful in providing a political rather than a technical emphasis. The technical briefings, too, had been valuable, although their number should perhaps be limited in future and their scheduling carefully considered. The "breakout session" was also considered to be extremely valuable but it had been too short to allow conclusions to be drawn on the important question of the predictability, flexibility and sustainability of WHO's financing.

3. There was a view that Standing Committee members' presentations repeated those of the Secretariat. Therefore, if members of the Standing Committee were to continue to present the SCRC's views on specific agenda items, their statements should always be circulated in advance of the Regional Committee session, to allow for consultation and secure consensus among SCRC members and to avoid overlaps with presentations by members of the Secretariat.

4. Some Standing Committee members expressed serious concern about the practice followed by member countries of the European Union (EU) during RC62 with regard to draft resolutions, whereby new or heavily amended texts had been drawn up and introduced at the last minute, often in plenary. The SCRC had been working on the documents and resolutions throughout the year together with the Secretariat (consultations with some Member States had been held, including an open meeting of the SCRC in May). The Standing Committee accordingly called for clear channels of communication to be established between the country holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union, SCRC members from EU countries and the Secretariat, together with a proper coordination mechanism. The issue would be further discussed at the next session of the SCRC, following more exploratory discussions with Member States.

Dates and places of future sessions of the Twentieth SCRC

5. The Twentieth SCRC agreed to hold the following sessions:
- 26–27 November 2012 Sofia, Bulgaria
 - 18–19 March 2013 WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, Denmark
 - 18–19 May 2013 WHO headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland
 - 15 September 2013 Cascais, Portugal

Election of officers of the Twentieth SCRC

6. The Standing Committee confirmed that, in accordance with Rule 9 of the SCRC's Rules of Procedure, Ms Dessislava Dimitrova (Bulgaria), as Deputy Executive President of RC62, would become ex officio the Chairperson of the Twentieth SCRC. Dr Ray Busuttil (Malta) was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Twentieth SCRC.

Preliminary outline of the sixty-third session of the Regional Committee

7. The SCRC made a preliminary review of the "rolling agenda" paper (prepared by the Secretariat and updated on a continuous basis) listing topics for consideration at future sessions of the Regional Committee. In addition to the standard agenda items (report of the SCRC; matters arising from decisions and resolutions of the World Health Assembly and Executive Board, including WHO reform; elections and nominations, etc.), RC63 could consider a number of technical items, as well as receiving several progress reports (preferably to be covered in the Regional Director's address). Those technical items should include a European mental health action plan, reports back from the Environment and Health Ministerial Board and Task Force, feedback from the Oslo 2 Conference in April 2013, violence against children, implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), and Health 2020 targets and indicators. Feedback information from the Eighth Global Conference on Health Promotion (Finland, June 2013) could also be provided. In addition, governance and "sunsetting" of resolutions, as well use of the Organization's programme budget as a tool for accountability, would also be on the agenda.

8. The Regional Director informed the SCRC that a draft provisional agenda of RC63 would be presented to the Twentieth Standing Committee at its second session. When drawing up that document, the Secretariat would endeavour to strike a balance between reporting on implementation, on the one hand, and presenting strategies for future action, on the other.