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Progress report on the European Environment and Health Process



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Progress report on the European Environment and Health Process

In accordance with resolution EUR/RC60/R7 on the future of the European environment and health process (EHP) adopted by the 60th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in 2010, an annual progress report is submitted to the Regional Committee and to the Committee on Environmental Policy of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on achievements and areas requiring greater effort, as well as on the activities, workplans and financial requirements of the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB) and the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF).

This report presents the activities undertaken by the EHMB and the EHTF and the implementation of their respective intersessional programmes of work. The report also highlights the main developments in preparation for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in 2017.

An overview of the work of the Regional Office for Europe, in particular the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Bonn, Germany, in the area of health and environment as an essential support to the EHP is also included.

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Introduction

1. In accordance with resolution EUR/RC60/R7 on the future of the European environment and health process adopted by the 60th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC60) in 2010, the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB) reports annually to the Regional Committee for Europe and to the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on achievements and areas requiring greater effort, as well as on the activities, workplans and financial requirements of the EHMB and the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF).
2. This report to the 66th session of the Regional Committee for Europe and to the 22nd session of the UNECE CEP represents an important milestone in the implementation of the European Environment and Health Process (EHP) between the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, held in Parma, Italy, on 10–12 March 2010, and the Sixth Ministerial Conference, to be held in June 2017. It covers progress on the implementation of the EHP since September 2015 and:
 - (a) presents feedback from the 21st session of the UNECE CEP (CEP-21) in October 2015;
 - (b) summarizes the work undertaken by the EHMB and the EHTF within the EHP framework and the challenges identified in fulfilling the commitments made in the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health (1);
 - (c) presents the main developments in preparation for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health planned for June 2017; and
 - (d) presents a summary of the work of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, in particular the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Bonn, Germany, in support of the EHP.

Governance and policy

Feedback from CEP-21 and CEP special session

3. CEP-21 took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 27–30 October 2015. The session considered the progress report on the EHP (document EUR/RC65/18), which had been submitted to RC65 in September 2015.
4. CEP-21 welcomed the information on new developments achieved under the EHP, including the outcomes of the High-level Mid-term Review Meeting (Haifa, Israel, 28–30 April 2015), and took note of the progress report on the EHP (document EUR/RC65/18) and the progress report on implementing the Parma Declaration (document EUR/RC65/11).
5. The CEP agreed to allocate more time on the agenda of CEP-22 to discuss progress on the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health planned for June 2017. CEP-21 requested that the UNECE secretariat solicit interest from the 53 UNECE member countries that are also Member States of the WHO

European Region with regard to serving on the EHMB during the 2017–2018 term by sending official letters in June 2016 to ministers of the environment seeking their input.

6. CEP-21 thanked WHO for the provision of expertise by the Regional Office and the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health and for collaborating on the implementation of environmental performance reviews in 2015. It also reviewed and took note of progress on the work of the Protocol on Water and Health and the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), supported jointly by the UNECE and Regional Office co-secretariat.

7. CEP-21 also recognized the contribution of the Regional Office to the development of the technical background documents and conference outcome documents for the Eighth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe (EfE), held in Batumi, Georgia, on 8–10 June 2016, at which air quality and health was one of two main themes. A clear, common position on this issue had been developed by WHO and the UNECE in order to strengthen the outcomes of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference and to ensure consistency with the work of the EHP.

8. A special session of the CEP took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 23–25 February 2016. The main objective was to review the preparations for the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference. At the session, Portugal delivered a statement on behalf of the EHP during the discussion of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference draft outcome document on air pollution.

9. Two important highlights from the CEP special session illustrating the links between the work of the EHP and the EfE process were:

- (a) the adoption of thematic papers and initiatives on a green economy (2) and on air quality (3) at the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference, calling for UNECE member states to affirm their commitment to implementing the actions indicated in those documents; and
- (b) an outline of the table of contents for the European regional assessment of the Global Environment Outlook 6 report (GEO-6), which will feature information about the EHP in the section entitled “Healthy planet, healthy people” (4).

Feedback from the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference

10. The Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference took place in Batumi, Georgia, on 8–10 June 2016. The EfE Conference brought together some 700 participants from the 56 member states of the UNECE, representing ministries of the environment and education, international organizations and nongovernmental organizations. It addressed two main themes: “greening the economy in the pan-European region” and “improving air quality for a better environment and human health”. The EfE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development organized a segment on education for sustainable development.

11. The EfE Conference adopted a ministerial declaration entitled “Greener, cleaner, smarter!” It also launched the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) and the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA), to which UNECE member states declared voluntary commitments to implementing actions specified in the two initiatives.

12. The WHO Regional Director for Europe delivered a keynote speech at the EfE Conference. She highlighted the burden of air pollution on health and emphasized the importance of fully implementing existing commitments in order to address this major public health risk. In her speech, the Regional Director advocated that the main focus should be on implementing effective multisectoral actions addressing the root causes of air pollution. She concluded by underscoring the importance of establishing political continuity and multisectoral synergies between the outcomes of the Eighth EfE Conference in 2016 and the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2017.

13. The EfE Conference provided a venue for a number of side events, including two events co-organized by the UNECE and the Regional Office for Europe, along with other partners.

14. The side event entitled “Riding towards the green economy: cycling and green jobs” was co-organized by Austria, France, Georgia, the Regional Office, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UNECE Environment and Transport Divisions and the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition. It launched preliminary findings of a new study on cycling and green jobs developed by the UNEP, the UNECE and WHO within the framework of THE PEP partnership on jobs in green and healthy transport. The side event brought together the transport, health and environment sectors and demonstrated how cycling, as an active means of mobility, can contribute to a green economy, clean air and better health. It also highlighted the roles of civil society and the private sector in further promoting cycling in Europe.

15. The side event entitled “Clean air for life” was co-organized by the UNECE, WHO, the European Environment Agency (EEA), Umwelt Bundesamt, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and the Pan-European Coalition of Environmental Citizens Organizations. The high-level speakers contributing to the event described the challenges to health and the environment posed by air pollution, reviewed the initiatives and commitments already in place to support UNECE member states in addressing air pollution, and emphasized the strong synergy and complementarity that exists among partner organizations committed to tackling air pollution.

Work of the EHMB

Seventh meeting

16. The seventh meeting of the EHMB took place on 19 November 2015 in Zagreb, Croatia, and was co-chaired by Mr Aramayis Grigoryan, Minister of Nature Protection of Armenia, and Dr Sinisa Varga, Minister of Health of Croatia.

17. The EHMB was briefed and informed about the outcomes of the Mid-term Review of the EHP, RC65, CEP-21 and the United Nations summit for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, as well as preparations for the Second United Nations Environment Assembly and for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2017.

18. The main topic of the meeting was the roadmap towards the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2017. Participants noted with appreciation

the presentation of *The European environment: state and outlook 2015* synthesis report (5) by the Executive Director of the EEA. The synthesis report highlights progress, such as improvements in efficiency in the use of energy and natural resources towards achieving a low-carbon economy, and challenges, for example, living within the limits of the planet, in the European environment with an outlook towards the future. Climate change and chemical safety, which are greatly influenced by global trends in emissions and policies, remain major areas of concern. These issues need to be examined through a systemic approach aimed at understanding the root causes of unsustainability and identifying systemic solutions, including the universalization of the circular economy. Upscaling niche innovations is needed to develop the green economy. To make an impact at the political level, it is necessary to develop a new and different narrative that makes the issues more appealing to politicians and the public and to set long-term targets, while considering actions within the foreseeable future.

19. The EHMB noted with appreciation the presentation of the proposed roadmap towards the Sixth Ministerial Conference and of the initial proposal for substantive items that could be considered within the context of political commitments to be adopted at the Ministerial Conference.

20. The EHMB expressed broad support for the approach proposed by the WHO secretariat to developing the outcome document of the Ministerial Conference and agreed to consult with the EHTF in that regard. They remarked on the importance of making explicit the contributions that could be made to strengthening health systems, addressing inequalities and contributing to universal health coverage, as well as tackling noncommunicable diseases. They remarked that, when addressing the circular economy, links to the chemical agenda would also be important, as well as those related to waste. They noted that the report *Closing the loop: an EU action plan for the circular economy* (6), launched by the European Commission on 2 December 2015, could serve as a useful reference for further discussion. They also highlighted the need to build on forthcoming opportunities for joint action, such as the document on air pollution that would be adopted at the Batumi Ministerial Conference. Finally, the EHMB urged that the goals set out in the Parma Declaration that had not yet been achieved continue to be pursued, and highlighted the importance of strengthening the education dimension of the proposed actions.

21. The EHMB nominated Armenia to represent it on the Ad Hoc Working Group (AWG) of the EHTF with respect to environment issues and requested Croatia to respond on health issues.

22. In January 2016, following their election by RC65, the Ministers of Health of Belarus and Uzbekistan succeeded those of Croatia and Georgia as members of the EHMB representing the health sector, along with the Ministers of Health of Lithuania and Spain.

Work of the EHTF

Fifth meeting

23. The fifth meeting of the EHTF took place in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 24–25 November 2015. The host country assumed the role

of Chair of the EHTF and Austria became the Co-Chair. The meeting was attended by representatives of 33 Member States, six stakeholder organizations and a number of international and local observers.

24. In reviewing the updates on relevant events and activities, the EHTF gave particular consideration to preparations for the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference due to its focus on air quality and health. It agreed to submit a statement on behalf of the EHTF to the UNECE CEP special session with regard to the draft outcome document of the EfE Conference, to provide comments and feedback on the background documents, to provide input from the EHP perspective during the event, to hold a meeting of the AWG immediately following the EfE Conference and to review the specific commitments that could be considered with respect to air quality as an outcome of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health building on the outcomes of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference and the Second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) of the UNEP.

25. Most of the work of the EHTF was dedicated to setting the future course of the EHP and the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference in 2017. The EHTF endorsed the implementation plan, introduced by WHO, for the roadmap towards the Sixth Ministerial Conference that had been requested by the Mid-term Review Meeting. The implementation plan operationalizes the roadmap, defines the scope of the themes for the preparatory process and provides an indication of steps that should take place as part of the development of the thematic areas within the framework of the roadmap. The EHTF requested the WHO secretariat to continue consultations with the countries that had expressed interest on the different environment and health themes in the roadmap and to include the agreed activities in the intersessional programme of work in order to feed into the negotiation process on the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference.

26. In the general discussion, the EHTF highlighted the importance of ensuring that:

- (a) in line with the conclusions of the Mid-term Review Meeting, further preparations take place in the context of the EHTF, ensuring consistency and coherence in the directions of its work and that of the EHMB;
- (b) the commitments already agreed to in the Parma Declaration are upheld and continue to be pursued;
- (c) the commitments to be undertaken at the Sixth Ministerial Conference reflect the priorities noted at the Mid-term Review Meeting (air pollution, climate change, chemical safety, water, sanitation and hygiene); and
- (d) the outcome document of the Sixth Ministerial Conference should have a very limited number of commitments, with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) targets.

27. As the implementation of the roadmap was already under way, extensive feedback was provided to the EHTF on topics already reviewed in meetings to date: urban green spaces and health; waste and human health; environmentally sustainable health systems; and water and sanitation. The choice of topics was dependent on the calendar of events in 2015 and included only those for which technical discussions had reached completion, regardless of their priority.

28. In the ensuing discussions, the EHTF took note of the discussion paper, presented by the secretariat, as an informal initial contribution to the deliberations on how the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference could be formulated. For the follow-up work they agreed to:

- (a) request that the open-ended AWG and the secretariat prepare the first draft of the Ministerial Conference outcome document for the next EHTF meeting in 2016;
- (b) use the five criteria proposed in the discussion paper to guide the development of the possible commitments to be undertaken at the Sixth Ministerial Conference;
- (c) ensure that the existing commitments under the Parma Declaration are reflected in an appropriate manner in the outcome document and that existing processes are duly taken into account, avoiding duplication;
- (d) make allowances for the time required to hold national consultations on the proposed new commitments, including by posting the relevant documents on the WHO SharePoint website; and
- (e) build on the work of the Working Group on Health in Climate Change to identify possible commitments for the EHP in the area of climate change, including on the basis of the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

29. During the discussion, participants highlighted the importance for the commitments to be supported by effective means to ensure implementation, monitoring and reporting. They also emphasized the need for appropriate national mechanisms to ensure follow-up in countries, and some considered that national environment and health policies could be a useful means to catalyse national action and engage different sectors within government. Regarding the possible priorities, the most frequently mentioned issues were: air pollution; waste management; cities; water, sanitation and hygiene; climate change; and chemical safety.

30. The EHTF also reviewed and adopted a rolling calendar of activities leading up to the Sixth Ministerial Conference, providing a clear pathway for technical and political consultations, and welcomed the invitation of Austria to host its next meeting in Vienna at the end of November 2016.

Future of the EHP

31. In developments since RC65, Croatia and the Russian Federation were elected members of the AWG in an online election. The AWG has held three face-to-face meetings (10 March 2016 and 28 April 2016 in Frankfurt, Germany, and 10 June 2016 in Batumi, Georgia) and two teleconferences (16 October and 13 November 2015). A number of Member State and stakeholder representatives took the opportunity to participate in the meetings, which were open-ended and broadcast via WebEx.

32. The AWG follows up on tasks within the scope of work of the EHTF. Its meetings have focused on the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference, particularly the draft materials and documents to be considered by Member States and stakeholders during the plenary discussions on the Conference outcome documents.

33. In its general discussions on the future of the EHP, the AWG agreed that the EHP is a unique regional platform for integration and intersectoral collaboration between the environment and health sectors, as well as engaging other sectors, including but not limited to the transport sector. For several countries, the EHP is also an important reference for the development of national policies and, as such, its existence and continuation is significant. The experiences and lessons learned through the EHP could serve as a model for other WHO regions. Furthermore, the AWG pointed out that the EHP should pay close attention to the changing political environment in order to remain politically relevant in the constantly changing policy, environmental and demographic context of the European Region.

34. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide an appropriate and necessary reference to frame the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference. In particular, through the commitments undertaken at the Ministerial Conference, Member States could strive to achieve specific selected targets within the SDGs, with an emphasis on those that have the strongest links to health.

35. The AWG agreed that the Sixth Ministerial Conference should:

- (a) be forward-looking, politically appealing and directly relevant to people and society (a “human-centred” approach);
- (b) focus on a limited number of new commitments that provide clear added-value and that deal with new and relevant issues not already addressed by other processes and/or initiatives. The identification of these priority issues would, in turn, define the partnerships, actors, implementation modalities and financing mechanisms most appropriate to move forward;
- (c) build on and acknowledge achievements, for example, by showcasing positive and inspiring experiences;
- (d) take stock of the results of relevant research and make use of newly available evidence;
- (e) result in a stronger engagement of the health constituency;
- (f) forge new partnerships with agents for change. These would include international financial institutions and the European Commission of the European Union, whose financing mechanisms could support implementation of the commitments made at the Ministerial Conference. Engagement of other sectors, such as energy, transport and finance, may be necessary. The role and engagement of the private sector would also be relevant, although this needs to be balanced against the ongoing discussions within the WHO governing bodies related to the framework of engagement with non-State actors;
- (g) ensure follow-up to the commitments made under the Parma Declaration, particularly the 2020 targets, for example, by addressing the challenges in terms of political will, resources and capacities that make it difficult to achieve progress throughout the European Region; and
- (h) address the main priorities identified at the Mid-term Review Meeting and at the fifth meeting of the EHTF: namely, air pollution, cities, chemical safety, climate change, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

36. Emphasizing the need for a new platform for change, two major themes emerged as particularly appropriate for the potential focus of new commitments and/or actions:

- (a) the importance of urban environments and cities as a platform for environment and health policy implementation and the need to develop collaboration with cities and local governments focusing on the priority areas identified by the EHP. This could refer, in particular, to air pollution, green spaces, transport-related issues, waste, and resilience to and mitigation of climate change. The urban dimension would also facilitate taking into account new regional issues, such as those related to migration and ageing. It would also bring the outcome of the Ministerial Conference closer to people (the “human-centred” approach); and
- (b) the opportunity to strengthen the engagement of the health sector while addressing multiple environment and health issues through the development of environmentally sustainable health systems. While originally springing from other instances of “greening” within the climate change agenda, the greening of health systems would result in very significant reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases and would also address a number of additional environmental issues, resulting in more effective use of resources (for example, energy and water), reduced emissions of pollutants and better environmental management. In turn, this would result in significant savings to health systems: savings that could be reinvested towards the prevention of health risks and health protection and promotion.

37. On 10 June 2016, the AWG held a back-to-back meeting with the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference in Batumi, Georgia. At the session, the AWG reflected on the main lessons from the EfE Conference that could be included in the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. In this discussion, the AWG identified the key elements of success of the EfE Conference as follows:

- (a) the implementation of the EfE reform, which helped to streamline governance of the EfE process;
- (b) the focus on two main themes – the green economy and air pollution; within the scope of the main themes concrete actions could be promoted, notably through BACA and the BIG-E;
- (c) the fact that UNECE member states could act as “sponsors” of different activities, sessions and events, thereby strengthening political support and linking these to national agendas; and
- (d) the opportunity for organizing side events, where the synergistic contributions made by different actors towards the same objectives could be showcased.

38. In addition, the AWG decided to develop a short, political outcome document and to include the specific actions, with SMART targets, as part of its implementation plan. It also decided to create an online collaborative space for the drafting of the outcome document and to ask the secretariat to develop a set of questions to be answered by the AWG to provide input to the next version of the draft outcome document, including its implementation plan and governance structure.

39. The AWG reviewed the initial outline of the implementation plan of the outcome document, which provided a good basis for further development. The AWG agreed that

the implementation plan should be precise, with time-bound targets that allowed monitoring of progress and corrective actions in case targets were not achieved on time. The AWG decided that further development of the implementation plan would be informed by consultations within the EHTF, the AWG and technical meetings organized in the context of the roadmap for the Sixth Ministerial Conference preparations.

40. The AWG further reflected on the governance structure, which would be informed by a report under development by the WHO Collaborating Centre on Complex Health Systems Research, Knowledge and Action at Durham University, United Kingdom.

41. The AWG expressed the general feeling that the governance of the EHP needed to be streamlined and simplified, supportive of desired outcomes and not burdensome; it should, however, address the objectives of high-level political participation in an appropriate format. It should also propose an inclusive yet flexible and transparent way of engaging the EHP stakeholders. Consideration could be given to developing arrangements among the relevant United Nations agencies, for example, drawing on the experience of the EEA, the UNECE and the UNEP in the management of networks for environmental monitoring and reporting.

42. The AWG also noted that the governance structure would need to address the challenges experienced with respect to:

- (a) the identification of hosts to hold regular meetings of the EHTF – consideration could be given to devising some incentives that could increase the attractiveness of hosting statutory meetings of the EHP;
- (b) the active engagement of ministers – consideration could be given to possible alternatives to the EHMB, for example, with the inclusion of high-level segments, chaired and attended by ministers, as part of the programme of EHTF meetings; and
- (c) ensuring the sustainability of the EHP in terms of resources.

Regional work in support of the EHP

43. The work of the Regional Office in programme budget area 3.5 on health and the environment is mandated by the Twelfth General Programme of Work 2014–2019 and the corresponding WHO programme budgets, as well as a number of resolutions of the World Health Assembly and the Regional Committee for Europe. To a large extent, this work covers the mandates provided by the EHP and represents its main supporting and implementation mechanism. In principle, the policy and strategy function is located at the Regional Office in Copenhagen, Denmark, while the majority of resources (staff and effort) are provided by the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Bonn, Germany, which serves as the main technical implementation and evidence development mechanism.

44. The European Centre for Environment and Health was established under the commitments made at the First Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 1989 and the provisions of the agreement between WHO and the Federal Government of Germany of 2012. It is an internationally recognized centre of excellence in the area of environment and health and much of its scientific work is used as a key evidence

base for the development and implementation of policies and legislation in Member States and in the EU.

45. In 2015, there were 17 biennial collaborative agreements with Member States of the European Region and direct collaboration with 20 Member States in the Region in the field of health and environment. During the current reporting period, the Regional Office has published 19 major technical reports and authored or co-authored 21 peer-reviewed articles in the area of environment and health.

46. The Regional Office, in close partnership with the UNECE and the UNEP, supports Member States in implementing multilateral environmental agreements, which are an important set of legally binding instruments addressing the environmental determinants of health, including chemical safety, within the International Health Regulations (2005), the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, the UNFCCC and other agreements. The Regional Office, through the European Centre for Environment and Health, hosts the co-secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Task Force on Health of the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

47. The European Centre for Environment and Health collaborates with the European Commission, for example, in providing advice on the impacts of air and drinking water quality on health in order to support EU policy development in these areas. The development of WHO environmental noise guidelines for the European Region, to be released in November 2016, will include the latest scientific evidence and will update the 1999 WHO Guidelines for Community Noise (7). In this area of work, the Regional Office has a strong partnership with the European Commission Directorate-General for the Environment and the EEA. Some of the recommendations of the Guidelines are expected to be included in Annex III of the EU Environmental Noise Directive,¹ which is currently under revision.

48. The European Centre for Environment and Health also contributes to WHO work under programme budget category 5 on preparedness, surveillance and response by providing technical expertise in the form of a WHO unified emergency response mechanism for the European Region and for all types of environmental emergencies, including heatwaves, floods, fires and chemical accidents. Active participation in the EU-supported table-top exercise on environmental and chemical emergencies in 2015 established and tested ways in which to cooperate with the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety in this area.

49. The Environment and Health Information System has been fully integrated into the European Health Information Gateway, the one-stop entry point for all databases of the Regional Office. The Gateway, designed to support Health 2020 implementation in particular, is an interactive repository of policy-relevant evidence and health information for the European Region.

¹ Directive 2002/49/EC.

50. In cooperation with the UNECE, the Regional Office provides the co-secretariat of THE PEP, a policy platform that brings together on equal footing ministries of transport, health and environment. Work has continued on developing the health economic assessment tool for cycling and for walking, which estimates the economic value of reduced mortality that results from specified amounts of walking or cycling. A series of webinars was implemented in English and German to build capacity for and facilitate the further uptake of the tool. In addition, the tool was used to determine EU estimates of the health effects of cycling and walking and to support the informal meeting of EU ministers of transport, which, under the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union, resulted in the adoption of the Declaration on cycling as a climate-friendly transport mode (8).

Roadmap towards the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

51. Throughout the reporting period, the European Centre for Environment and Health has been engaged in implementing the roadmap towards the Sixth Ministerial Conference, as endorsed by Member States at the Mid-term Review Meeting in 2015. The roadmap envisages eight broad themes in the area of environment and health (air, water, energy, food, cities, chemicals, waste and climate change), which would be reviewed from the perspective of evidence of relevance to health. In line with capacity and prioritization of thematic areas by the EHTF, the Centre has focused its work on the areas described below.

- (a) Urban green spaces and health are of growing interest, and of relevance to the EHP, under the cities theme of the roadmap. Pilot surveys were conducted in Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden; survey methodology and protocols and an indicator tool kit were developed and tested.
- (b) The implementation of World Health Assembly resolution WHA68.8 on addressing the health impact of air pollution included support for capacity-building focusing on the impacts of air quality through the development of the software tool AirQ+ to calculate the impact of air pollution on health. The tool, tested in several Member States, can estimate impacts of short- and long-term exposure to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}),² small particulate matter (PM₁₀),³ nitrogen dioxide, ozone and black carbon in ambient air and of long-term exposure to household air pollution from the use of solid fuel. The European Centre for Environment and Health is also leading the global revision of WHO air quality guidelines to be completed in 2018.
- (c) Regional priorities for the health sector in the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) 2020 goal were reviewed at an intergovernmental meeting, which reaffirmed the role of WHO and the health sector in policy development and the strengthening of legislation; monitoring, risk assessment and evidence collection; capacity-building; and

² Defined as particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 µm or less.

³ Defined as particulate matter with a mean aerodynamic diameter of 10 µm or less.

research. A proposal for a national framework for the health sector involvement in the management of chemicals was developed (9).

- (d) An expert group on the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) initiative in schools was established to guide the further agenda and implementation of the Parma Declaration commitments. The group met twice and includes representatives of the health and education ministries, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), development agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Regional roll out of global monitoring programmes such as the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation and the Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water as the official United Nations mechanisms to measure progress towards the achievement of SDG targets 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 implemented in the European Region through the European Centre for Environment and Health.
- (e) Together with Member States, the European Centre for Environment and Health developed key messages on climate change for health professionals and climate negotiators, with a view to the UNFCCC COP 21. The application and potential of climate services for health in Europe were explored and country profiles were developed. A high-level side event was organized at COP 21 jointly with the Scientific Centre of Monaco and the Health and Environment Alliance to raise awareness of the importance of the Paris Agreement for global public health. The side event was attended by the WHO Regional Director; His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco; heads of the UNECE, the World Meteorological Organization, the EEA and the Health and Environment Alliance; the Chief Scientist of UNEP; state secretaries of Germany and Serbia; and the Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the United Kingdom.
- (f) Twenty-two Member States of the European Region documented recent national and local experiences, lessons learned and barriers to flood prevention, which contributed to the development of WHO guidance on flood preparedness and response.
- (g) A process of broad consultations on developing environmentally sustainable health systems was initiated in 2015. This will lead to the inclusion of this important intersectoral issue among the policy priorities of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health.

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