



World Federation of Neurology

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Statement by the World Federation of Neurology (WFN) at the 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe on Agenda Item 5(b): Improving environment and health in the context of Health 2020 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

The influence of environmental factors such as weather, air or noise-pollution on the incidence neurological disease, in particular stroke, have been recently demonstrated by increasing evidence and will be an important agenda for the WFN who represents 119 members worldwide, who live under different conditions.

The effects of environment on the function and integrity of the nervous system are becoming increasingly important and we are seeing more evidence in this respect. In addition to classical pollution disasters threatening neurological health as the Minimata disease, the dioxin caused disease, and food and nourishment related diseases, and in the classical toxicology, a large number of substances are considered, and usually evaluated in epidemiology by the Bradford Hill criteria. Increasingly it appears that air pollution, smog and fine dust are playing important roles in the generation of cerebrovascular disease, in particular stroke. Some data are also showing potential detrimental effects of noise pollution with respect to brain health and cardiovascular health.

The WFN therefore welcomes the efforts of the European Region of the WHO and its Member States to shape common action order to decrease the burden of diseases caused by environmental factors, and in particular the resolutions

summarized in the Declaration of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health.

The WFN in particular fully supports the intention of the WHO European Region and its Member States reinforced by the said Declaration to

- *promote these aims by working in partnership with all relevant sectors and stakeholders;*
- *maintain and further develop adequate mechanisms to gather and analyse relevant evidence on health and environment as a basis for further decisions;*
- *to actively support open, transparent and relevant research on established and emerging environmental and health risks in order to strengthen the evidence-base to guide policy-making and preventive action*
- *to use the European environment and health process as an established intersectoral and inclusive process and platform for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for contributions to the strategic planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring and reporting of progress made towards the objectives of the Declaration;*
- *to mobilize resources and build or pool capacities which may include bilateral or multilateral international collaboration;*
- *continue and expand key strategic and institutional partnerships while ensuring the appropriate participation of all relevant intergovernmental and non-state actors.*

In this spirit of partnership the WFN is more than prepared to provide support to the environment and health process and to share its expertise.

In view of the growing importance of the topic, the WFN has established, as early as in 2007, its Environmental Neurology Research Group (ENRG) which aims at promoting clinical research and education in all matters having to do with the adverse effects of environmental substances and events upon the nervous system by conducting studies and organizing educational meetings.

For the WFN it is an important mission raise awareness in this field and therefore has decided to dedicate the World Brain Day 2018 to the topic „Environment and neurological disease.“

The WFN calls upon the WHO European Region to support these efforts by

- cooperating and participating in the second EFRG meeting on the impact of air pollution on the brain in adults and foetuses from 29 November to 1 December 2017 in Strasbourg;

- actively supporting the topic of World Brain Day 2018 as a partner of this awareness effort
- to joint the WFN and its EFRG in strengthening further work, in the framework of the environment and health process, on questions related to the environmental impacts on the adult and developing brain with the aim of organizing an international meeting on this particular aspect.

About the WFN

The World Federation of Neurology (www.wfneurology.org) is a UK charity, devoted to the interest neurology worldwide. It has presently 119 members, and has regional representations in the Americas, Asia-Oceania, the Arab countries, Africa and Europe. The aim is to „Fostering quality neurology and brain health world wide“. The regional society for Europe is the European Academy of Neurology (EAN). The WFN has a long tradition of good relations and close cooperation with the WHO, including projects such as WHO Atlas of Neurology, participation in ICD processes, and also the recent timely changes in the ICD 11 concerning stroke classification.

<https://www.wfneurology.org>

<https://worldneurologyonline.com/article/world-brain-day-2017-stroke-is-a-brain-attack-prevent-it-and-treat-it/>

<https://myana.org/publications/news/world-brain-day-2017>

