



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

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**Twenty-sixth Standing Committee  
of the Regional Committee for Europe**

First session

**Rome, Italy, 20 September 2018**

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## **Report of the first session**

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## Opening of the session

1. The Twenty-sixth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its first session on Thursday, 20 September 2018, during the final day of the 68th session of the Regional Committee (RC68) in Rome, Italy.
2. The incoming Chairperson, Mr Ioannis Baskozos (Greece), welcomed the new members from Croatia, Poland, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, who would each serve a three-year term of office from September 2018 to September 2021, replacing the members from Georgia, Iceland, Italy and Tajikistan, whose terms expired at RC68. The Regional Director invited the new members to visit the Regional Office for a briefing on its work.
3. The Chairperson noted that Finland would ensure the link between the Twenty-sixth SCRC and the Executive Board during the year.
4. The provisional agenda (EUR/SC26(1)/2) and provisional programme (EUR/SC26(1)/3) of the session were adopted.

## Election of officers

5. Mr Søren Brostrøm (Denmark) was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Twenty-sixth SCRC.

## Reflections on the 68th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

6. Members of the SCRC congratulated the Government of Italy and the WHO Secretariat on organizing a successful meeting. The selection of topics had given Member States the opportunity to discuss the issues that were of concern to them. The extensive consultations and timely production of documentation had fostered consensus on the proposals under consideration, while the more focused and well conducted panel discussions had enabled a different kind of interaction to take place and promoted ownership of the proceedings by participants.
7. The presence of political leaders had been very important, since they strengthened advocacy for health and for WHO in the European Region. That practice should be continued in future years. In addition, leading scientists might be invited to address the Regional Committee, to make a bridge between research and practice in public health. All the events that had taken place at RC68 bore witness to the intersectoral approach that was being adopted throughout the Region, including in the Organization's geographically dispersed offices.
8. The SCRC supported the idea of including more films or video presentations of agenda items, as a way of imparting messages more effectively. One member observed that the statements by representatives of civil society organizations (especially of medical and pharmaceutical students) had been very dense and, of necessity, delivered very rapidly. It was suggested that those organizations might organize small stands on the margins of the meeting, at which they could present their work. The "activation sessions" were welcomed; members proposed that they should become a regular part of the session, both morning and afternoon,

in the future. The social programme, notably the cultural event held the previous evening, had been excellent.

9. The Regional Director observed that there had been unprecedented support for the items on the agenda, which bore witness to the relationship of trust that had been built up over the years between Member States and the Secretariat. She underscored the spirit of consensus that had prevailed during the session, as well as the increased active participation by subregional groups of Member States. The interconnected nature of the different agenda items reflected the comprehensive and integrated approach taken by the Regional Office to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Director-General had been impressed by the strength and importance of the Regional Committee. He would consider which items from his global agenda could be integrated into the agenda of RC69 and intended to attend the session the following year for longer.

## **Dates and places of future sessions**

10. The Twenty-sixth SCRC agreed to hold its second session in Athens, Greece, on 5 and 6 December 2018; its third session at the Regional Office in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 13 and 14 March 2019 (dates to be confirmed); its fourth session at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 and 19 May 2019; and its fifth session at the Regional Office on 15 September 2019.

## **SCRC subgroups**

11. The Standing Committee agreed that the subgroup on governance had a number of open items and should continue its work. The current remaining members were from Denmark, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. The SCRC members from Poland, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation volunteered to join the subgroup. The SCRC agreed that the member from Hungary would take over as chair of that subgroup.

12. Similarly, the subgroup on countries at the centre, chaired by the SCRC member from Slovenia and with remaining members from Hungary, Turkey and Uzbekistan, would continue its work. The SCRC members from Croatia, Poland and the Republic of Moldova indicated that they wished to join the subgroup.

13. The SCRC agreed that, following the discussion at RC68 on the Regional Framework for Surveillance and Control of Invasive Mosquito Vectors and Re-emerging Vector-borne Diseases 2014–2020, there was no need to continue its subgroup on vector control.

14. The subgroups could hold teleconferences during late 2018 and early 2019; the first face-to-face meetings would be held at the Regional Office on 12 March 2019, the day before the opening of the Twenty-sixth SCRC's third session.

## **Preliminary outline of RC69**

15. The Regional Director presented an initial draft provisional agenda of RC69 (document EUR/SC26(1)/5). One of the proposed policy and technical topics was primary health care:

40th anniversary of the Declaration of Alma-Ata. Careful consideration should be given to how to present that item, in view of the fact that the host country of the Global Conference on Primary Health Care (Astana, Kazakhstan, 25–26 October 2018) planned to take forward the outcome of that Conference to the Executive Board and the World Health Assembly in 2019. It was therefore suggested that the focus should be on the implementation of the new vision of primary health care (Astana Declaration) in Europe.

16. The agenda of RC69 should not be too heavy, to give representatives time to interact on the subject of the election of the Regional Director.

17. During the discussion at RC68, three topics had been singled out for possible consideration at RC69: WHO's work at country level, the activities of WHO's geographically dispersed offices as an integral part of the Regional Office, and health literacy.

18. The SCRC suggested that the discussion at RC69 could focus on the implementation of primary health care, with particular attention to the links between primary health care and public health, as well as to the area of innovation in health systems as raised at the high-level meeting on Health Systems for Prosperity and Solidarity: Leaving No One Behind (Tallinn, Estonia, 13–14 June 2018).

19. The Executive President of RC68<sup>1</sup> drew attention to the fact that a new Regional Director would be elected the following year and suggested that an informal meeting or ministerial lunch could be organized, at which representatives could be informed of the work done by the Regional Director during her two terms of office. One member stressed the excellent leadership in the WHO European Region over the last eight years and suggested that an analysis be undertaken of the criteria/elements that had led to this success. It was suggested that this could be a separate item on the agenda of RC69 as being helpful for future leadership, including beyond Europe.

## **Other matters, closure of the session**

20. One member proposed that an item should be included on the agenda of the Twenty-sixth SCRC's second session concerning follow-up of the two United Nations high-level meetings on noncommunicable diseases and tuberculosis, scheduled to be held the following week, and preparations for the United Nations high-level meeting on universal health coverage to be held in 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Attending the session as an observer, in accordance with Rule 14.2.4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe.

## **Annex 1. Agenda**

1. Opening by the Chairperson and Regional Director
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and programme
3. Welcome and introduction of new members of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC)
4. Reflections on the 68th session of the Regional Committee for Europe
5. Election of officers of the Twenty-sixth SCRC
6. Dates and places of future meetings
7. Set up subgroups of the Twenty-sixth SCRC (if any)
8. Preliminary outline of the 69th session of the Regional Committee
9. Other matters, closure of the session

## **Annex 2. List of documents**

### **Working documents**

EUR/SC26(1)/1	Provisional list of documents
EUR/SC26(1)/2	Provisional agenda
EUR/SC26(1)/3	Provisional programme
EUR/SC26(1)/4	Provisional list of participants
EUR/SC26(1)/5	Draft provisional agenda of the 69th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

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