

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

First session

**Copenhagen, Denmark, 19 September 2019**

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## **Report of the first session**

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## **Opening of the session**

1. The Twenty-seventh Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its first session on Thursday 19 September 2019, during the final day of the 69th session of the Regional Committee for Europe (RC69) in Copenhagen, Denmark.
2. The incoming Chairperson, Mr Søren Brostrøm (Denmark), welcomed the new members from Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria and Switzerland, who would each serve a three-year term of office from September 2019 to September 2022, replacing the members from Greece, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, whose terms expired at RC69.
3. The Chairperson noted that Executive Board member from Finland would ensure the link between the Twenty-seventh SCRC and the Executive Board during the year.
4. The provisional agenda (document EUR/SC27(1)/2) and provisional programme (document EUR/SC27(1)/3) of the session were adopted.

## **Election of officers**

5. Dr Iva Pejnovic Fanelic (Croatia) was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Twenty-seventh SCRC.

## **Reflections on RC69**

6. Members of the SCRC commended the close cooperation established between the Government of the host country, Denmark, and the Secretariat on the practical arrangements for RC69. The session had been carefully prepared and efficiently conducted; the nomination of the Regional Director, in particular, had been well organized. Strategic priorities had been set for the year ahead, with clear links to the Organization's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 (GPW 13), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The discussions at the session should feed into deliberations at global level, in the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board.
7. Agenda items had been very thoroughly presented by directors of divisions at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, but the SCRC would have liked to have seen more emphasis placed on the health aspects of issues, focusing on the outcomes achieved and not just the action taken.
8. Commenting on the technical briefing on regional collaboration for health with parliaments in the WHO European Region held the previous day, the Standing Committee reiterated that any establishment of a network of parliamentarians must have a strong mandate from the SCRC and the Regional Committee.

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

9. The Twenty-seventh SCRC agreed to hold its second session in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 26 and 27 November 2019; its third session at the Regional Office in Copenhagen,

Denmark, on 11 and 12 March 2020; its fourth session at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on 16 May 2020; and its fifth session in Tel Aviv, Israel, on 13 September 2020.

## **SCRC subgroups**

10. The Standing Committee agreed that its subgroups on governance and countries at the centre should continue their work during 2019–2020. The subgroups could hold teleconferences during late 2019 and early 2020; the first face-to-face meetings would be held at the Regional Office on 10 March 2020, the day before the opening of the Twenty-seventh SCRC's third session.

## **Preliminary outline of RC70**

11. The Regional Director presented a draft provisional agenda (document EUR/SC27(1)/4) and programme (document EUR/SC27(1)/5) for RC70. She noted that the agendas of the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board were currently being reviewed in the light of the three strategic priorities in GPW 13, together with the fourth “pillar” of strategic work with countries and governance. The Standing Committee might wish to consider adopting a similar approach for the agenda of the Regional Committee, building on the “rolling agenda” that had already been drawn up and looking at the European Region's action plans in the light of those priorities.

12. Given its experience with the Programme budget 2020–2021, the Regional Committee might also wish to reiterate its request to review the proposed programme budget 2022–2023 in detail. With regard to the impact framework, the European Region had hitherto used the six targets and list of indicators contained in the Health 2020 monitoring framework to report on progress in the Region. At its next session, the Twenty-seventh Standing Committee might wish to consider how best to align that monitoring framework with the output and outcome indicators currently being finalized at global level, and whether to take the issue forward to RC70.

13. WHO transformation, and in particular the alignment of the three levels of the Organization, should remain on the agenda until that transformation was complete and institutionalized. The regional roadmap for attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals should also be reviewed at RC70.

14. Antimicrobial resistance had last been considered by the Standing Committee in 2011. Following the submission of the final report of the Interagency Coordination Group to the Secretary-General of the United Nations earlier in the year, he had asked WHO to host the newly established tripartite WHO/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/World Organisation for Animal Health secretariat. In the spirit of “One Health Plus” and a horizontal approach, RC70 might wish to consider the issue of antimicrobial resistance, as well as digital health and the health of migrants and refugees. Lastly, having reviewed WHO's outpost offices and country offices, the Regional Committee might also wish to discuss WHO's collaborating centres, especially in view of the fact that 50% of them were hosted in the European Region.

15. Noting that the Executive Board had designated the year 2020 as the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife”, the Regional Director nominee suggested that nursing and midwifery could

also be considered by RC70 in the context of a discussion on a sustainable health workforce and revision of the WHO code of conduct on ethical recruitment.

16. SCRC members also singled out a number of other issues for inclusion on the agenda of RC70 or as topics for technical briefings, including healthy ageing, health in prisons, access to medicines, health security, digitization and the health of migrants and refugees. In general, however, they advocated that a flexible approach to the agenda should be adopted: due account should be taken of the topical issues of the day, as identified by the Regional Director nominee, and items should only be placed on the agenda if action was needed.

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

17. The Executive Board member from Finland called for the support and advice of SCRC members on how to handle the time pressure resulting from the reduced meeting time for the global governing bodies of WHO, and how best to advocate the adoption of rolling agendas.

18. The Chairperson of the Twenty-seventh SCRC paid tribute to the Regional Director, noting that she was leaving the Regional Office in good hands. She had been a great guide to him personally in the four years that he had been Director-General of the Danish Health Authority, a great inspiration and a courageous leader.

## **Annex 1. Agenda**

1. Opening by the Chairperson and the Regional Director
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and programme of the session
3. Welcome and introduction of new members of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC)
4. Reflections on the 69th session of the Regional Committee for Europe
5. Election of officers of the Twenty-seventh SCRC
6. Dates and places of future sessions
7. Establishment of subgroups of the Twenty-seventh SCRC (if any)
8. Preliminary outline of the 70th session of the Regional Committee
9. Other matters, closure of the session

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

### **Working documents**

EUR/SC27(1)/1	Provisional list of documents
EUR/SC27(1)/2	Provisional agenda
EUR/SC27(1)/3	Provisional programme
EUR/SC27(1)/4	Draft provisional agenda of the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe
EUR/SC27(1)/5	Draft provisional programme of the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

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