
A DECADE OF ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH IN SEE

Third Health Ministers' Forum

Health in All Policies in South-eastern Europe: A Shared Goal and Responsibility

With the special participation of SEE policy-makers from other government sectors,
SEE Regional Cooperation Council initiatives and partners
Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 13–14 October 2011

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The regional cooperation for public health was formalized when the South-eastern Europe ministers of health adopted and declared their commitment to the provisions of the Dubrovnik and Skopje Pledges, endorsed at the First and Second Health Ministers' Forums in 2001 and 2005 respectively.

The SEE regional cooperation in public health remains a high priority for underpinning the political cooperation and economic development in the SEE region, facilitating confidence-building, and being a supporting instrument for European and Euro-Atlantic integration. It has entered a very important phase, with changes in the political set-up and emerging new entities, in particular the Regional Co-operation Council, and with two of the SEE Health Network member states (Bulgaria and Romania) having become members of the European Union, requiring the SEE Health Network to adapt to the new realities and develop a more regionally owned and led framework for cooperation. In response to such developments and needs, the Memorandum of Understanding (2008) and the legal agreement on the Seat of the Secretariat of the SEE HN arrangements (2010) were signed.

The Third Health Ministers' Forum "Health in All Policies in the SEE: A Shared Goal and Responsibility" comes after a decade of regional cooperation in SEE (2001-2011), streamlined towards European efforts for achieving equity and accountability in health, building on major European resolutions, charters and communications, treaties, frameworks and action plans as well as the new European policy for health, Health2020.

The main purpose of the Forum is to introduce the values, priority areas and actions of the new European policy for health, Health 2020, and the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach, with the objective of achieving better health, equity and accountability. This will lead to a renewed sub-regional commitment to public health in South-eastern Europe.

The concept of HiAP approaches health improvement as a shared societal goal across all parts of government. It addresses complex challenges of health and well-being by promoting an integrated policy response across sector and portfolio boundaries, incorporating concern for

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health and health equity impacts into the policy development process of all sectors and agencies. This allows governments to address the key determinants of quality of life, well-being, health and health inequities in a more systematic way, and enables them to take into account the benefit of improved population health for the goals of other sectors.

The Third Ministerial Forum will review the performance of the SEE Health Network in the past 10 years and identify opportunities for future cooperation. The Forum will also review the status, national capacities and future opportunities related to Health in All Policies in the SEE and will bring together high level representatives of governments in the SEE region and wider in sharing best practices and identifying common challenges. The status and challenges of non-communicable diseases in the SEE will be also a major topic of discussion as well as the common joint efforts to address issues related to socio-economic determinants of health.

The Forum will be a firm step along the pioneering path taken by the ministers of health in 2001 when they signed the Dubrovnik Pledge, the first political document on cooperation in health development in the SEE region.

The expected outcome of the Third Health Ministers' Forum will be a political commitment of all SEE governments to an extended sub-regional cooperation for introducing and/or strengthening the values, priority areas, and actions towards achieving equity and accountability in health. **A third political document, the Banja Luka Pledge, will be signed to that effect.**