

Press backgrounder
Copenhagen, 7 September 2012

The 2012 WHO Regional Committee for Europe

Each autumn, the annual sessions of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe bring together ministers of health, high-level health decision-makers, nongovernmental organizations, civil society and academics to discuss issues that concern the health of European populations.

The Regional Committee is WHO's decision-making body in the European Region. It is attended by delegations from all 53 Member States that make up the WHO European Region.

The main purpose of the Regional Committee is to determine regional policies and supervise the activities of the WHO Regional Office for Europe. It also provides a forum for regional cooperation and enables WHO/Europe to better serve its Member States.

At the Regional Committee sessions, WHO/Europe organizes plenary sessions to discuss issues of global and regional concern, and facilitate the interaction of governments, WHO experts, partners and observers. The Regional Committee also features technical briefings, panels of experts and press conferences focused on important regional health subjects.

When, where, and who?

The sixty-second session of the Regional Committee takes place on 10–13 September in Malta. Up to 300 delegates from across the WHO European Region are expected to attend the event. This number includes country delegations, as well as observers from other intergovernmental organizations such as the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and representatives of various civil society organizations.

The delegation for each country usually consists of the head of the delegation – typically the health minister, deputy minister or head of the international relations department – and up to 10 members.

The annual Regional Committee sessions are held either at WHO/Europe's head office in Copenhagen, Denmark, or in another country of the Region. The last two meetings were held in Baku (2011) and Moscow (2010). A complete list of the past Committee sessions is available on the WHO/Europe web site (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/who-we-are/governance/regional-committee-for-europe/past-sessions>).

WHO/Europe is working closely with the host country to organize the Regional Committee event in Malta and facilitate participation by the various stakeholders.

The agenda

During the Regional Committee session in Malta, the delegations will decide on major policy issues related to the future work of WHO in the European Region, which will be implemented by WHO/Europe. The management and organization of WHO and its Regional Office for Europe will also be discussed. The key issues on this year's agenda include:

- the new European policy framework for health and well-being, Health 2020, and its supporting strategy;
- the European action plan for strengthening public health capacities and services;
- the strategy and action plan for healthy ageing in Europe 2012–2020;
- the strategic coherence of WHO/Europe's work:
 - the WHO Regional Office for Europe's country strategy 2012–2014;
 - the renewed strategy on geographically dispersed offices; and
- WHO reform:
 - the draft Twelfth General Programme of Work 2014–2019;
 - the global proposed programme budget 2014–2015, and the European perspective; and
 - the impact of WHO reform on the work of WHO/Europe.

The list of agenda items, accompanying documents, draft resolutions and background information are available in the four working languages of WHO/Europe (English, French, German and Russian) on its Regional Committee for Europe web site (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/who-we-are/governance/regional-committee-for-europe/sixty-second-session>). Note that draft resolutions may be revised during discussions before formal adoption by the Committee in plenary sessions.

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