



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

Europe

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

First session

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Report of the first session

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Opening of the session

1. The Twenty-fifth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its first session on Thursday, 14 September 2017, during the final day of the 67th session of the Regional Committee (RC67) in Budapest, Hungary.
2. The incoming Chairperson, Dr Amiran Gamkrelidze (Georgia), welcomed the new members from Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania and Uzbekistan, who would each serve a three-year term of office from September 2017 to September 2020, replacing members from Germany, Portugal, Romania and Turkmenistan whose terms expired at RC67. The Regional Director invited new members to attend a briefing on the work of the Regional Office, to be held (if needed) in Copenhagen after the third session of the Twenty-fifth SCRC in March 2018.
3. The Chairperson noted that Turkey would ensure the link between the Twenty-fifth SCRC and the Executive Board during the year.
4. The provisional agenda (EUR/SC25(1)/2) and provisional programme (EUR/SC25(1)/3) of the session were adopted.

Election of officers

5. Mr Ioannis Baskozos (Greece) was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Twenty-fifth SCRC.

Reflections on the 67th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

6. Members of the Twenty-fifth SCRC exchanged initial reflections on RC67. They congratulated the Government of Hungary and the Regional Director and her staff on the excellent organization of the session. The high level of attendance, including the presence of two Prime Ministers, two Deputy Prime Ministers, several Ministers of Health and numerous senior level delegates, testified to countries' heightened understanding of what health meant for development and to the fact that the work of WHO in the European Region was becoming politically visible. It was evident that the Regional Office was currently in a phase of implementing policies that had been agreed at previous sessions. The agenda had been well planned, with issues ranging from the global (such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) to the specific (health workforce, access to medicines, etc.). The preparatory work done by SCRC subgroups was commended and should be continued in the year to come.
7. The technical briefings, particularly on the work of WHO's country offices, had been much appreciated. Nonetheless, six briefings in four days had perhaps been too many, as had four panel discussions in two days. Consideration should be given to organizing those discussions in such a way as to more closely involve representatives of Member States. The background documentation for ministerial lunches and the annotated agenda of the Regional Committee should be made available earlier, and the latter should be presented in the same way as those for sessions of the Organization's global governing bodies, citing references to the relevant documents under each item. The Secretariat should endeavour to arrange the consultations with Member States on technical documents at different times.

8. The Organization's governance mechanisms in the European Region were clearly working well, and the lessons learned there should be applied at the global level. The Secretariat of the Regional Office was urged to exercise a foresight function, scanning the horizon for issues that would become important, such as harmonized and coherent approaches to immunization, vector control and the use of data. Interaction with neighbouring regions, especially on issues such as migration, would become increasingly important.

9. Responding to the reflections by SCRC members, the Regional Director said that she, too, had been very pleased with the high-level political participation in the work of the Regional Committee. She commended the extensive participation by representatives of all Member States, notably those from the eastern and south-eastern part of the Region. It had been fortunate that the Director-General had been able to attend nearly three days of the session; he had expressed his satisfaction with the level of support that he had received from European Member States. The initiative of showing video films presenting "Voices of the Region" had been successful and would be continued.

10. She welcomed SCRC members' positive feedback concerning the technical content of RC67 and agreed that the Regional Office should carry out a foresight function. Vector-borne diseases and the use of data would most likely be included on the agenda of RC68, the latter in connection with the presentation of the 2018 European health report. A joint mission was being planned by the WHO Regional Directors for Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean on the issue of the health of refugees and migrants in their respective Regions.

Dates and places of future sessions

11. The Twenty-fifth SCRC agreed to hold its second session in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 28 and 29 November 2017; its third session at the Regional Office in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 13 and 14 March 2018 (dates to be confirmed); its fourth session at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on 19 and 20 May 2018; and its fifth session in Rome, Italy, on 16 September 2018.

SCRC subgroups

12. The Standing Committee agreed that the subgroup on governance established by the Twenty-fourth SCRC had a number of open items and advised the continuation of the subgroup. On the other hand, the subgroup on International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) would probably not be required to continue since the focus would be on the five-year global strategic plan, while the subgroup on migration and health would not be needed as a regional policy was currently in an implementation phase in the European Region. The Standing Committee accordingly agreed to establish two new open-ended subgroups, on vector control and on WHO's country presence. The latter subgroup could look at all aspects of WHO's work at the country level, including (if relevant) IHR and migration issues.

Subgroup on governance

13. The SCRC members remaining in the subgroup on governance were those from Germany,¹ Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia. The member from Denmark expressed interest in joining the subgroup. The subgroup would continue to be chaired by the member from Iceland.

Subgroup on WHO's country presence

14. The SCRC members from Germany,¹ Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Turkey, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan expressed interest in joining the subgroup. The member from Slovenia agreed to chair the subgroup.

Subgroup on vector control

15. The SCRC members from Georgia, Greece, Italy and Tajikistan expressed interest in joining the subgroup. The member from Italy accepted to chair the subgroup.

Preliminary outline of RC68

16. The Regional Director presented an initial draft provisional agenda of RC68 (document EUR/SC25(1)/4). Members agreed to have an electronic exchange of ideas on that draft and to finalize the provisional agenda of RC68 at the Twenty-fifth SCRC's second session in Tbilisi in November 2017.

¹ Participating in her capacity as Executive President of RC67.

Annex 1. Agenda

1. Opening of the session by the Chairperson and the Regional Director
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and the provisional programme
3. Welcome and introduction of new members of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC)
4. Reflections on the 67th session of the Regional Committee for Europe
5. Election of officers of the Twenty-fifth SCRC
6. Dates and places of future meetings
7. Set up subgroups of the Twenty-fifth SCRC (if any)
8. Preliminary outline of the 68th session of the Regional Committee, including concept notes for technical documents
9. Other matters, closing of the session

Annex 2. List of documents

Working documents

EUR/SC25(1)/1	Provisional list of documents
EUR/SC25(1)/2	Provisional agenda
EUR/SC25(1)/3	Provisional programme
EUR/SC25(1)/4	Draft provisional agenda of the 68th session of the Regional Committee for Europe

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