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**Matters arising out of resolutions and decisions of the
World Health Assembly and the Executive Board**

The Sixty-first World Health Assembly adopted 21 resolutions. This paper reviews those resolutions (of both a technical and an administrative nature) that are of particular interest to the work of WHO in the European Region.

The documents and resolutions mentioned in this paper are available from the Secretariat and can also be downloaded from the Internet (<http://www.who.int/gb>).

Contents

page

Resolutions adopted by the Sixty-first World Health Assembly of particular interest to the European Region of WHO	1
Policy and technical matters.....	1
Administrative, financial and budgetary matters	10
List of resolutions adopted by the Sixty-first World Health Assembly Geneva, 19–24 May 2008	13

Resolutions adopted by the Sixty-first World Health Assembly of particular interest to the European Region of WHO

Policy and technical matters

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.1	Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication	The European Region remains under the threat of importation of wild poliovirus from the remaining endemic countries and those where circulation of wild viruses has resumed. An additional threat is posed by the possibility of so-called vaccine-derived polioviruses (VDPVs) gaining the ability to circulate in the human population, leading to clinical cases and potential outbreaks comparable in severity with the disease brought on by a wild poliovirus.	<p>Although importations cannot be prevented owing to large-scale human migration and long-range travel, their negative impact can be effectively countered by maintaining the highest possible level of routine polio immunization coverage in the European Region.</p> <p>High-quality laboratory-based surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) and supplementary measures (monitoring the environment and investigating clinical cases of enterovirus infections to rule out polio) must be continued in the Region, to ensure a prompt operational response should the reintroduction of wild poliovirus or circulation of VDPVs occur.</p> <p>Both components (immunization and surveillance) are properly addressed in the “Regional Strategic Plan to Sustain the Polio-Free Status of the Region, 2008–2013”. The Regional Office (EURO) will continue its work with Member States to facilitate the plan’s implementation.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.2	Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)	<p>The decisions and requests included in the resolution regarding the requirements for evaluation and reporting to the World Health Assembly and concerning efficient communication for event management will have a positive impact on implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) in the Region. These should be incorporated in the continuous interaction between States Parties and Regional Office.</p> <p>As the implementation of the IHR has medium- and long-term implications, the sustainability of activities and efforts at regional level (particularly those aimed at building core capacity in the countries) has to be given top priority in support to States Parties.</p>	<p>EURO will continue its efforts to create a common understanding of the scope, spirit, and mutual obligations of the Regulations through meetings with national focal points and the competent authorities (e.g. those responsible for port health). Overall, substantial progress has been made during the first 12 months of implementation.</p> <p>EURO will continue to foster the transparent exchange of information related to public health events of national and international concern through dedicated communications, connectivity tests, national intersectoral workshops, and cooperation with relevant technical units, WHO collaborating centres, and other regional institutions and expertise.</p> <p>EURO will continue to help Member States assess and maintain their core capacities for surveillance and response, as well as their points of entry, through subregional training initiatives, dedicated country-specific technical assistance and fund-raising activities; it will continue to work with the WHO Office for Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response in Lyon, France and to support collaboration and partnership between Member States and regional international organizations.</p> <p>EURO will facilitate the development of national action plans by 14 June 2009, to ensure that core capacities are present throughout the territories of States Parties by 14 June 2012, as per the provisions of the IHR.</p> <p>EURO will advocate for further development of global guidance with regard to points of entry under the IHR, as anticipated from relevant units at WHO headquarters.</p> <p>EURO will continue supporting IHR Secretariat functions and conveying needs and reservations expressed by the Member States to the Secretariat.</p> <p>Issues related to the resolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different approaches to the use of Annex 2 within the Organization (legal vs public health) may affect adequate event management. The same remark applies to use of the (secure) Event Information Site.

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.4	Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol	<p>A global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol will be developed in close collaboration with the WHO regions, intergovernmental organizations, health professionals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and economic operators (industry). It is expected that the European Alcohol Action Plan and the Framework for Alcohol Policy in the WHO European Region will play an important role in the drafting process.</p> <p>WHO headquarters and EURO, in close collaboration with the European Commission, have recently initiated a global survey using the same questionnaire on alcohol consumption, related harm and responses. The data collected from this survey will be used to guide the process.</p>	<p>This is the first time that a global strategy on alcohol will be drafted and it is to be welcomed. EURO has established a strong position in this area, has developed policy papers and documents on alcohol, and will continue with the implementation of these policies.</p> <p>EURO and WHO headquarters have increased their collaboration during the past year, and the Regional Office has played an active role in developing a global survey instrument to monitor the level of consumption, harm and responses in Member States.</p> <p>There is a need to keep a strong position at the regional level and therefore a continued need for financial support from the Member States to the Regional Office's work on alcohol. EURO is planning to carry out activities that support the implementation of the Framework in Member States, including the establishment of a new alcohol information system. Furthermore, EURO has started work on developing guidelines to be used for drafting and implementing a national health action plan on alcohol and has started to make a synthesis of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm at country, regional and local levels.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.14	Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy	<p>The Sixty-first World Health Assembly endorsed the action plan for carrying out the global strategy on noncommunicable diseases (NCD). The plan supports the development and implementation of national NCD strategies and action plans, in the light of the growing NCD burden.</p> <p>It urges Member States to map and analyse the epidemic of NCD, reduce the exposure of populations to underlying modifiable risk factors (tobacco, alcohol abuse, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity) and their determinants; strengthen people's capacity to make healthy choices; and reorient health care systems to respond to the need for effective management of chronic diseases.</p> <p>The plan is a useful framework for operationalizing global and regional NCD prevention and control strategies, using a consistent framework across regions. It will also be helpful for identifying, in concrete terms, the synergies and complementarities of the work of WHO headquarters and other regions and for promoting a more coordinated approach to intercountry and country-level activities. Although a number of Member States and the Regional Office had expressed some concerns about the formulation of such an action plan in the initial drafting stages, these concerns were by and large successfully addressed.</p>	<p>The action plan adds technical value and political impetus to the European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of NCD and to EURO's efforts to promote NCD action and control. The six action objectives around which the document is structured, as well as the proposed performance indicators, can be used as a framework for implementation of the European strategy.</p> <p>Action will be focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identifying the implications, individually and collectively, of implementing the Action Plan at global and regional levels (WHO headquarters will be convening meetings to that effect); and b) reviewing the NCD work done so far and adjusting plans and actions to reflect the priorities and framework set by the action plan. <p>The document certainly provides the opportunity and legitimacy to continue to highlight, to the Regional Committee, the importance of seriously addressing NCD across the Region.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.15	Global immunization strategy	<p>The Region faces increasing challenges from anti-vaccination sentiments and a growing indifference towards the importance of immunization in the absence of disease. Such trends endanger the Member States' sustainable commitment to immunization, including key priorities such as keeping the Region free from polio, achieving the regional goal of eliminating measles and rubella by 2010, and introducing new and underutilized vaccines.</p>	<p>The Regional Office will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reinforce policies and guidelines as necessary to keep the Region polio-free; • continue the efforts required to certify the Region as having eliminated measles and rubella, while simultaneously promoting the further development of policies and guidelines as necessary to verify and maintain elimination status; • strengthen and expand national systems for detecting, reporting on and responding to vaccine-preventable and other communicable diseases. Special emphasis will be placed on integration of existing surveillance systems, data management and strengthening of human resource capacity, as well as on promoting sustainable financial resources as required; • strengthen and expand national surveillance systems for vaccine-related adverse events, linked with monitoring systems for ensuring compliance with safe injection practices; • provide policy and technical support to Member States in order to maximize equitable access of all people to vaccines of assured quality and desired efficacy, including new and underutilized vaccines; • provide advice and guidance as appropriate for public health and fiscal policies and guidelines supporting the introduction of new and underutilized vaccines in national immunization programme schedules; • reinforce Member States' commitment to sound policies and sustainable human and financial resources for high-quality routine immunization service delivery within the context of strengthening of health systems; • ensure that successes and best practices from Member States are recognized and implemented.

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.16	Female genital mutilation	<p>The resolution recognizes the existence of female genital mutilation (FGM) among immigrant populations in Europe and acknowledges the role of WHO in providing guidance to Member States on health care and legislation.</p> <p>There are no reliable data on the practice of FGM and on the number of girls at risk in Europe. However, several countries with high percentages of migrants in their populations (such as France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) have estimates of this problem.</p> <p>Some countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have developed specific criminal laws, although in none of them have cases been brought to court. All Member States have laws that can be used against FGM.</p> <p>Although some countries have developed technical guidelines for the clinical management of women with FGM, health services are unfamiliar with the consequences of FGM. This can result in inadequate care and can discourage women from seeking care.</p> <p>Research on FGM in Europe, either on its clinical aspects or on its social and behavioural aspects, is scarce.</p>	<p>EURO will continue to work with the International Centre for Reproductive Health in Ghent, Belgium on research, advocacy and legislation.</p> <p>EURO is organizing a meeting with the German Ministry of Health in October 2008 on violence against women, and FGM is one of the topics to be covered in this meeting.</p> <p>Main regional partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly adopted resolution 1247 in 2001. This resolution endorses WHO's position in considering FGM as a violation of human rights. • European Commission. The Commission encourages Member States to pass legislation against this practice. • European Parliament. The Parliament has a Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.
WHA61.17	Health of migrants	<p>The resolution urges Member States and WHO regions to promote the inclusion of migrants' health in regional health strategies; to develop/support assessments and studies and share best practices; to strengthen service providers' and health professionals' capacity to respond to migrant needs; to engage in bi- and multilateral cooperation; and to establish a technical network to further research and enhance cooperation capacity. It asks that a report on implementation of the resolution be submitted to the Sixty-third World Health Assembly (2010).</p>	<p>EURO will continue to work with Member States to further facilitate the exchange of information and promote research and interventions related to migrants' health. Given the high profile of migration in the European Region and because one third of all global migrants live in the Region, it could be timely for EURO to review its work on this issue from different angles and to decide on the approach to be adopted for implementation of the resolution.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.18	Monitoring of the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals	<p>The resolution reaffirms the commitments made to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fostering national commitment to strengthen national health systems, including health information systems; • continuous monitoring of progress towards the MDGs through annual reports; • cooperation with relevant partners. <p>The resolution echoes EURO's commitments to accelerate its work on MDGs, as agreed in Regional Committee resolution EUR/RC57/R2.</p>	<p>The Regional Office's Country Strategy specifically reinforces the health systems approach contributing to attainment of the MDGs. Progress has been made in particular towards MDGs 4, 5, and 6. However, there are still challenges in the area of MDG monitoring, calling for improved data quality and availability.</p> <p>Through direct country work, EURO is helping Member States to strengthen their national health information systems and to make progress towards achieving the MDGs. The country-specific actions undertaken by EURO during the past year are described in the report on implementation of EURO's Country Strategy (<i>Implementation of the Regional Office's Country Strategy (2006–2007 period)</i>). Copenhagen, August 2008.).</p> <p>Annual reporting on MDGs will be undertaken by EURO's Health Intelligence Service, to provide input to the global report.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.19	Climate change and health	<p>The resolution urges Member States to protect health from climate change by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing health measures and integrating them into plans for adaptation to climate change, • building the capacity of public health leaders, • strengthening the capacity of health systems to monitor and minimize the public health impacts, • promoting effective engagement of the health sector and its collaboration with all related sectors, agencies and key partners at national and global levels, • expressing commitment to meeting the challenges posed by climate change, and • providing clear directions for planning actions and investments at the national level. <p>The resolution requests the Director-General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to consult Member States on the preparation of a workplan for scaling up WHO's technical support to Member States; • to engage actively in the UNFCCC Nairobi Programme for action and to inform Member States. 	<p>The Regional Office will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist Member States in developing a regional strategy/action plan on protecting health from climate change; • strengthen technical support to Member States by providing information on efficient measures and international policy developments, building capacity and sharing lessons on effective health measures in climate-related policies; • support national action on strengthening health system preparedness, by encouraging multilateral partnerships in particular areas at risk and vulnerable populations; • continue successful partnerships with European agencies such as the European Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the European Environment Agency and the Joint Research Centre. <p>Climate change will be an important topic for the next WHO European ministerial conference on health and environment.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.20	Infant and young child nutrition: biennial progress report	<p>The resolution urges Member States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to strengthen implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes; • to continue action on the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding and the Innocenti Declaration of 2005 on infant and young child feeding; • to implement the WHO/FAO guidelines on safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula; and • to take action through food safety measures to reduce the risk of intrinsic contamination of powdered infant formula. <p>All these issues are of high relevance for the European Region of WHO.</p>	<p>EURO will support Member States in translating the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding into national action plans.</p> <p>EURO will support Member States in developing national food-based dietary guidelines for young children.</p> <p>EURO will continue to promote early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and optimal infant and young child nutrition as essential for achieving the MDGs.</p> <p>EURO will continue to promote the adoption and implementation of the new WHO child growth standards.</p> <p>EURO will continue to strengthen the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.</p>
WHA61.21	Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property	<p>The resolution affects all European countries in terms of the access and affordability of medicines in their health system, as well as in terms of developing new medicines for areas where no or inadequate therapies are available.</p> <p>The European Union (EU) is a major player in this area, and coordination with the EU is needed.</p> <p>Coordination is also required with other United Nations organizations that are mandated in this area (especially the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization) and with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.</p>	<p>Countries in the WHO European Region actively support and implement research and development (R&D) strategies and initiatives to increase access to medicines.</p> <p>There is a need to explore and discuss with European countries (especially those in eastern Europe) how they can further collaborate in the process.</p> <p>Coordination with ongoing and future initiatives needs to be discussed with the EU and EU countries.</p> <p>Further financial support to WHO is needed for implementation of the work plan.</p>

Administrative, financial and budgetary matters

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.5	Financial report and audited financial statements for the period 1 January 2006 – 31 December 2007	<p>The financial report highlights the challenges caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the weakening of the United States dollar and • the growing share of voluntary contributions in the overall budget of WHO. 	<p>More flexibility is needed in donor contributions, to enable WHO to implement activities as per the strategic objectives (SOs) in the Medium-term Strategic Plan (MTSP), and not to be driven into areas of donor interest. The weakening of the United States dollar has substantially affected the European Region’s programme budget and capacity to deliver on its commitments during 2008–2009, and corrective actions need to be taken to ensure achievement of agreed results.</p>
WHA61.6	Miscellaneous income 2006–2007 and financing gap for strategic objectives 12 and 13	<p>There is a funding gap in respect of meeting the approved total budget for SOs 12 and 13.</p> <p>Considering the exceptional surplus in Miscellaneous income realized in 2006–2007, the World Health Assembly resolves to appropriate an additional US\$ 15 million to finance this gap.</p>	<p>A report on the status of the Miscellaneous income account is to be presented to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly.</p>
WHA61.8	Special arrangements for settlement of arrears: Kyrgyzstan	<p>The schedule for repayment of Kyrgyzstan’s arrears was accepted; hence Kyrgyzstan has regained its voting rights.</p>	<p>The secretariats at EURO and WHO headquarters have worked with individual Member States over the past years to agree on repayment schedules. All the European Member States in question have now regained their voting rights.</p>
WHA61.9	Report of the External Auditor to the Health Assembly	<p>The external auditor’s report did not highlight any major issues regarding the European Region. Global issues identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the special risks associated with introduction of the Global Management System (GSM) and • the need to streamline the recruitment process. <p>The External Auditor’s report was adopted by the Health Assembly without objections.</p>	<p>The recommendations made by the External Auditor are already being implemented in EURO.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.10	Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules	The resolution makes provision for an adjustment to the salary scale of senior WHO officers: the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General, and Assistant Directors-General and Regional Directors.	
WHA61.11	Method of work of the Health Assembly	<p>The resolution makes the following amendments to the method of work of the Health Assembly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee on Nominations: the Committee on Nominations is abolished. As a result, the rules covering the election of officers of the World Health Assembly are amended whereby the Health Assembly will elect the President and 5 vice-presidents as well as the chairmen of Committees A and B. Each main committee will elect two vice-chairmen and a rapporteur. • Conduct of business – proposals to be voted on in the order in which they have been circulated to delegations. 	
WHA61.12	Multilingualism: implementation of action plan	<p>The resolution requests the Director-General to implement the action plan (contained in documents EB121/6 and /6 Corr. 1) as rapidly as possible, and in particular:</p> <p>(1) to prepare, before January 2009, a timetable for implementation and a table showing the global financial implications;</p> <p>(2) to prepare a strategy to set translation priorities, associating Member States by means of a mechanism of informal consultations.</p> <p>The Director-General is also asked to ensure equal respect for linguistic diversity throughout the Organization, to establish a database showing in which official languages staff in the professional category are fluent, to take account of health care background when recruiting WHO language services staff, and to promote access to quality language training.</p> <p>The Director-General is requested to report back to the World Health Assembly in 2009 and every two years thereafter.</p>	<p>For staff at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, this will entail:</p> <p>(1) consulting with counterparts at WHO headquarters and in other regions, to ensure that the specific requirements of the Region are taken into account in the timetable and financial table (this will also be part of detailed preparation of the 2010–2011 proposed programme budget);</p> <p>(2) maintaining the Regional Office’s procedures for selection of a limited number of titles as corporate publications in each biennium. In addition, informal consultations will continue to be held with interested Member States, notably concerning publications in Russian.</p> <p>The respective units in the Regional Office’s Department of Administration and Finance (Human Resources, and Staff Development and Learning) will take action, as necessary, with regard to recruitment and training.</p> <p>The Regional Office will provide WHO headquarters with the information required for reporting back to the World Health Assembly.</p>

Resolution	Title/Subject	Regional implications	Action/Comments
WHA61.13	International Agency for Research on Cancer: amendments to Statute	The Sixty-first World Health Assembly accepted the amendments to the Statute of the International Agency for Research on Cancer. These amendments concern the composition of the Scientific Council, the nomination and appointment procedure, duration of appointment, and replacement procedure.	The amendments are not expected to affect the work of EURO. No further action is suggested.

Annex

**List of resolutions adopted by the Sixty-first World Health Assembly
Geneva, 19–24 May 2008**

- WHA61.1 Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication
- WHA61.2 Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)
- WHA61.3 Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan
- WHA61.4 Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol
- WHA61.5 Financial report and audited financial statements for the period 1 January 2006 – 31 December 2007
- WHA61.6 Miscellaneous Income 2006–2007 and financing gap for strategic objectives 12 and 13
- WHA61.7 Members in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution
- WHA61.8 Special arrangements for settlement of arrears: Kyrgyzstan
- WHA61.9 Report of the External Auditor to the Health Assembly
- WHA61.10 Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules
- WHA61.11 Method of work of the Health Assembly
- WHA61.12 Multilingualism: implementation of action plan
- WHA61.13 International Agency for Research on Cancer: amendments to Statute
- WHA61.14 Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy
- WHA61.15 Global immunization strategy
- WHA61.16 Female genital mutilation
- WHA61.17 Health of migrants
- WHA61.18 Monitoring of the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals
- WHA61.19 Climate change and health
- WHA61.20 Infant and young child nutrition: biennial progress report
- WHA61.21 Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property