



EUROPE

**Thirteenth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe
First session**

Bucharest, Romania, 15 September 2005

EUR/RC55/SC(1)/REP
26 October 2005
54401
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Report of the first session

Introduction

1. The Thirteenth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its first session in Bucharest on Thursday 15 September 2005, immediately after the closure of the fifty-fifth session of the Regional Committee (RC55).

Election of a Vice-Chairperson

2. The SCRC decided to postpone the election of a Vice-Chairperson until its second session in November.

Brief review of the outcome of the fifty-fifth session of the Regional Committee

3. The Standing Committee felt that RC55 had been well managed, with good presentations from both the Secretariat and SCRC members. Nonetheless, some time constraints had been encountered: combining several subjects under one agenda item had proved to be difficult, and representatives of Member States had tended to make lengthy oral interventions describing their countries' experience in a given field – they might perhaps be encouraged to submit written statements instead. The SCRC welcomed the involvement of invited speakers and suggested that a permanent invitation should in future be extended to the European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection.

4. The technical briefings held outside the formal meetings had been a success: they were a way of fostering lively debate on specific issues without the necessity of reaching agreement on a text of a draft resolution. It was important, however, for such "side events" to be organized at the SCRC's request, in the context of the overall programme of an RC session. In order to build on that initiative, the SCRC agreed that, at its next meeting in November 2005, it would look again at ways of making more creative use of the time available for an RC session. It would also consider the question of whether to retain both an oral presentation and a document describing the follow-up to previous RC sessions.

5. The agenda item on WHO's Eleventh General Programme of Work 2006–2015 had been added at a late stage, at the request of WHO headquarters. The Standing Committee was informed that a full draft of the General Programme would most likely be available before its next session. The SCRC recalled that the Pan American Sanitary Bureau/WHO Regional Office for the Americas had held a regional consultation in February 2005, while the General Programme was still being formulated, and believed it was important to ensure extensive, face-to-face consultation with Member States as part of the process of drawing up the General Programme. It accordingly recommended that the Secretariat should organize a meeting of European Member States of WHO in early or mid-December 2005, at which the full draft could be reviewed before it was submitted to the Executive Board session in January 2006.

Review of the draft plan of work of the Thirteenth SCRC, 2005–2006

6. The Standing Committee confirmed that its next session would be held in Vienna on 21 and 22 November 2005, at the kind invitation of the Government of Austria, with subsequent sessions at the WHO Regional Office in Copenhagen on 27 and 28 March 2006, at WHO headquarters in Geneva on 21 May 2006 and again at the Regional Office on 10 September 2006. The agenda for the second session should include an item on influenza preparedness, to report back on the outcome of a second joint European Commission/WHO workshop that would be held on the subject at the end of October.

Other matters

7. The Chairman paid tribute to the sterling work done over the years by Ms Julie Bénichou, Technical Assistant, Support to Governing Bodies, WHO Regional Office for Europe and wished her well in her new post with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.