

Respiratory diseases cause about 1 million deaths annually in the WHO European Region, Lung cancer is the leading cause of respiratory death, followed by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lower respiratory infections and tuberculosis (TB). 5.4 million disability adjusted life years are lost annually to respiratory diseases such as asthma. More than half of all the deaths from respiratory disease are due to diseases caused by smoking. The total cost of respiratory disease in the EU 28 alone exceeds a staggering €380 billion. These figures are taken from the newly revised European Lung White Book¹, published at the ERS Congress earlier this month.

Against this burden, the European Respiratory Society² welcomes the opportunity to address the 63rd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, and takes particular note under **point 5 - Policy and Technical Topics of progress reports** in:

Agenda Point 5 - Policy and technical topics - (K) Progress Reports - (i) Communicable diseases

Progress report on the implementation of the consolidated action plan to prevent and combat MDR and XDR resistant TB in WHO European region 2011-2015.

ERS:

- is deeply concerned by the reported increase in MDR-TB among newly reported TB cases. The fact that the number of newly diagnosed patients who are resistant to multiple drugs is rising shows that transmission is spreading, despite prevention efforts,
- acknowledges the successful cooperation with the WHO in the field of TB prevention and care. In particular, the ERS/WHO TB Consilium which provides an internet based consultation system to provide suggestions on clinical management of complicated TB cases – such as drug resistant, co-infection with HIV and paediatric cases,
- urges the WHO Member States to go further and to introduce a coordinated public health mechanism to guarantee TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care across borders – in line with the minimum package as recommended by the Wolfheze consensus statement³,
- calls on the Member States to support more research into TB prevention and care.

Agenda Point 5 - Policy and technical topics - (K) Progress Reports - (ii) Non-Communicable diseases

Tobacco control in the WHO region

- ERS appeals to all WHO Members to sign and ratify the Protocol to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

Action Plan for implementation of the European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of non-communicable disease 2013-2016

ERS:

- repeats it's call for environmental exposures to be included as indicators within the NCD debate. Air pollution has serious and immediate health effects on respiratory health and we call on Member States to recognise the serious role environmental factors play in causing and exacerbating NCDs,
- urges Member States to promote early diagnosis procedures for NCDs such as lung function tests and methods for screening for sleep disorders, lung cancer, COPD and other chronic respiratory conditions, including infectious diseases.

¹ The European Lung White book is available at <http://erswhitebook.org/>

² For more information on the European Respiratory Society visit www.ersnet.org

³ [Minimum package for cross-border TB control and care in the WHO European region: a Wolfheze consensus statement](#)