



European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF)

Rules of Procedure

As adopted at the 10th meeting of the EHTF, 17–18 February 2021

I. Membership and attendance

Rule 1

1.1 In accordance with Annex II of the Declaration of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, held in Ostrava, Czechia, on 13–15 June 2017 (hereinafter referred to as the “Ostrava Declaration”), and endorsed by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Environmental Policy, the European Environment and Health Task Force (hereinafter referred to as “EHTF”) shall consist of officials nominated by the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region and recognized stakeholders (listed in Table 1 of Annex II of the Ostrava Declaration) as the focal points for the European Environment and Health Process (EHP).

1.2 Stakeholders not listed in the above mentioned Annex II may be recognized as such through a decision of the EHTF at one of its meetings.

Rule 2

2.1 Any Member State or stakeholder wishing to change its appointed focal points shall notify the WHO Regional Office for Europe, which serves as the Secretariat to the EHTF (hereinafter referred to as the “Secretariat”).

2.2 Within the limitations of logistical and financial provisions for EHTF meetings and in agreement with the Secretariat, EHTF members may be accompanied by a reasonable number of other members of their delegation.

2.3 EHTF members eligible for financial support for their participation in EHTF meetings shall receive such support only for officially nominated focal points, representatives or their alternates. Financial support will be dependent on the resources available to the Secretariat for that purpose.

2.4 If a focal point is not able to attend the EHTF meeting, an alternate may replace him/her with full rights to speak, vote and otherwise participate in the meeting.

Rule 3

3.1 The EHTF meetings shall be private unless it is decided otherwise.

3.2 EHP observers, as defined in Annex II, Section IV of the Ostrava Declaration, are entitled to

participate in the meetings of the EHTF without the right to vote.

3.3 Bearing in mind the substantive issues on the agenda, and taking into account the terms of any relevant agreement, the Chair of the EHTF, in consultation with the co-Chair and the Secretariat, may invite representatives of a Member State, Associate Member or non-Member State, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, other intergovernmental or nongovernmental organizations or other entities and individuals to participate without a vote in the deliberations of the EHTF as observers.

3.4 Reports of the EHTF meetings and the EHTF Programme of Work, along with all other non-confidential meeting documents, shall be made public in an appropriate manner after the draft meeting report has been cleared by the Chair, the co-Chair and the Secretariat in its provisional form, subject to final approval at the following meeting.

II. Meetings

Rule 4

4.1 The EHTF shall meet at least once a year, and shall determine the dates and places of its meetings. In line with the provisions set out in Annex II of the Ostrava Declaration, one of the EHTF meetings between two Ministerial Conferences should be at high level with participation of senior government officials (paragraph 19 of Annex II of the Ostrava Declaration), unless otherwise decided by the EHTF.

4.2 Notices convening the scheduled meetings of the EHTF, together with the proposed agenda, shall be sent by the Secretariat not later than six weeks before the meeting to all EHTF members and to other participants as may be invited to the meeting under Rule 3.

4.3 All proposals for formal decisions, draft resolutions and other major recommendations to be submitted to the EHTF, as well as other working papers, shall be made available by the Secretariat to the EHTF members not later than three weeks before the meeting.

4.4 EHTF members shall have the opportunity to provide comments on and make proposals for items on the agenda, sending their proposals to the Secretariat not later than one week before the meeting.

Rule 5

5.1 The EHTF, after having consulted the Secretariat, may also hold additional meetings as appropriate and required.

5.2 The WHO Regional Director for Europe shall also convene the EHTF at the joint request of at least 18 Member States addressed to him/her in writing and stating the reason for the request. In this case the EHTF shall be convened within 30 days following receipt of the request. The agenda of such a meeting shall be limited to the question having necessitated that meeting.

5.3 If events occur requiring urgent action and specifically an early additional meeting of the EHTF or a subdivision thereof, the WHO Regional Director for Europe may, in consultation with the Chair and the co-Chair, convene the EHTF in a special meeting and shall fix the date and determine the place of the meeting.

III. Agenda

Rule 6

The provisional agenda of each meeting shall be drawn up by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair and the co-Chair. It shall be dispatched with the notice of convocation to be sent in accordance with Rule 4 or 5 of these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 7

7.1 Except in the case of meetings convened under Rule 5, the provisional agenda shall include, inter alia:

- (a) items the inclusion of which has been requested by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe or the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy;
- (b) all items the inclusion of which has been ordered by the EHTF at a previous meeting;
- (c) any item proposed by a member of the EHTF, it being understood that (i) the Secretariat would not automatically prepare a report on the item and (ii) the EHTF, when adopting its agenda, could decide to defer consideration of the item to a future session in light of its relative urgency;
- (d) any item proposed by the WHO Regional Director for Europe in his/her capacity as the head of the Secretariat.

7.2 Should the items on the agenda be too numerous to be completed in one meeting, the EHTF may convene extra meetings, or decide to consider specific matters in another appropriate manner.

7.3 Any proposal for the inclusion on the agenda of any item under the provisions of subparagraph (c) above, fully documented as appropriate, shall reach the Secretariat not later than four weeks before the meeting.

Rule 8

Except in the case of special meetings convened at the request of the EHTF members under Rule 5, the Chair and the co-Chair in consultation with the Secretariat, may include any question suitable for the agenda which may arise between the dispatch of the provisional agenda and the opening day of the meeting in a supplementary agenda, which the EHTF shall examine together with the provisional agenda.

IV. Officers of the EHTF

Rule 9

9.1 The EHTF shall elect a Chair and a co-Chair, alternating between the health and the environment sectors, from among its members representing the Member States.

9.2 The duration of the Chair's and the co-Chair's term is at least one year and will cease when a new Chair and a new co-Chair have been elected at the EHTF meeting following the completion of the one-year period.

9.3 In the case that the Chair ceases to be the nominated focal point of his/her Member State, the co-Chair will automatically assume the position of the Chair until the end of the current term of

the Chair and continue this function for another term as defined in Rule 9.2. The EHTF will elect a new co-Chair at its next meeting.

9.4 In the case that both the Chair and the co-Chair of the EHTF cease to be focal points of their Member States, the Secretariat will conduct elections of the new Chair and co-Chair electronically. The Secretariat will invite all EHTF members to nominate candidates for the vacant offices within a reasonable period, not exceeding six weeks. After this period, the Secretariat will immediately start the electronic election procedure.

9.5 To ensure continuity of the process, at the end of his/her term of office as defined in Rule 9.2, the co-Chair will become the Chair, and a new co-Chair will be elected.

Rule 10

In addition to exercising such powers as are conferred upon them elsewhere by these Rules, the Chair and the co-Chair shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the EHTF, and shall direct the discussions, accord the right to speak, put questions, announce decisions and ensure the application of these Rules. The Chair and the co-Chair shall accord to speakers the right to speak in the order of their requests.

Rule 11

If both the Chair and the co-Chair are unable to attend a meeting of the EHTF, or are absent from a meeting or any part thereof, the EHTF shall elect a person to preside during the meeting.

V. Secretariat

Rule 12

The Secretariat will provide secretariat services for the EHTF, its Bureau, and for the other bodies as defined in Rule 19.3.

Rule 13

The Secretariat shall report to the EHTF on the technical, administrative, financial and policy implications, if any, of all agenda items submitted to it.

Rule 14

The Secretariat may at any time make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration. The Secretariat may also designate senior staff of the WHO Regional Office for Europe having technical and managerial responsibilities related to any question under consideration to attend the EHTF meetings and respond to any points raised on the said items of the agenda.

Rule 15

15.1 The Secretariat shall prepare the report of the meeting, to be distributed to the members as soon as possible after the close of the meeting to which it relates. EHTF members shall inform the Secretariat in writing of any corrections they wish to have made, within such period of time as shall be indicated by the Secretariat, having regard for the circumstances.

15.2 The report of the meeting, together with other documents, shall be made public in accordance with Rule 3.4.

VI. Languages

Rule 16

Any member of the EHTF or invited representative may speak in a language other than one of the languages decided for the conduct of business. In this case, he or she shall provide for interpretation from that language into the language(s) chosen for the session.

Rule 17

All formal decisions, draft resolutions and other recommendations to be submitted to the EHTF, as well as finalized reports of its meetings, shall subsequently be made available in the four official languages of the WHO European Region.

VII. Conduct of business

Rule 18

Focal points from at least 30 Member States of the WHO European Region, one of whom may for this purpose be the Chair, shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 19

19.1 The EHTF makes decisions, in principle, by consensus. However, if a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair and the co-Chair may propose adoption of a decision by voting. A decision will be adopted if a majority of those members present and voting supports the proposed decision. For this purpose, each EHTF member will have one vote.

19.2 In the case that an electronic vote is organized as foreseen in Rule 9.4 or for any other reason for which the EHTF Chair and the Secretariat agree to hold an online electronic vote, this vote will be organized by the Secretariat. Electronic voting will be organized in a manner that ensures sufficient time for the proposal to be considered by the EHTF members, full confidentiality of the voting and a fair and transparent process.

19.3 The EHTF may establish ad hoc working groups and other bodies, as necessary, on a temporary basis to address specific needs and issues. If and when such bodies are established, the EHTF will decide on their mandate and will secure resources needed for their tasks. Unless decided otherwise by the EHTF and to the extent they are applicable, the present Rules of Procedures shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the above-mentioned working groups and other bodies.

19.4 The EHTF is accountable to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and shall report to them annually on progress in the implementation of the EHP. The EHTF shall also submit its decisions for endorsement by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy.

VIII. EHTF Bureau

Rule 20

The EHTF elects its Bureau, according to Annex II, Section VII of the Ostrava Declaration, which specifies its composition, duration of term and way of working.

Rule 21

The EHTF Bureau is led by the Chair and co-Chair of the EHTF. The term of the EHTF Bureau members is three years. Representatives of Member States may be elected to the EHTF Bureau for a maximum of two consecutive terms. The EHTF Chair and co-Chair are *ex-officio* members of the EHTF Bureau. The immediate previous Chair will remain an *ex-officio* member of the EHTF Bureau for at least one year and until the EHTF meeting following the completion of this one-year period

Rule 22

These Rules of Procedure apply to the EHTF Bureau, to the extent they are applicable, according to paragraph 26 of Annex II of the Ostrava Declaration.

IX. Suspension and amendment of the Rules of Procedure

Rule 23

Any of these Rules may be suspended by the EHTF, provided that at least 48 hours' notice of the proposal for such suspension has been given to the Chair and the co-Chair and communicated by them to the members 24 hours before the meeting at which the proposal is to be submitted. If, however, on the advice of the Chair and the co-Chair the EHTF is unanimously in favour of such a proposal, it may adopt it immediately and without notice.

Rule 24

The EHTF may adopt amendments or supplements to these Rules of Procedure at any of its meetings.

Rule 25

These Rules of Procedure replace those adopted at the High-level Mid-Term Review Meeting of the European Environment and Health Process held in Haifa, Israel, on 28–30 April 2015.