

Role of the WHO Regional Office for Europe in global health governance

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Health – a precious global good

- Higher on the political and social agenda of countries and internationally
- Important global economic and security issue
- Major investment sector for human, economic and social development
- Major economic sector in its own right
- Matter of human rights and social justice

Challenging, complex and uncertain environment

- Global health architecture has become more extensive but very complex
- Health challenges require active involvement of all levels of government (international, national and local)
- In an interdependent world, joint action on health challenges and on the determinants of health becomes ever more important

Health challenges: complex, multifaceted and multilevel

- Increasing health inequities
- Demographic shifts
- Environmental threats
- Obesity
- Alcohol misuse
- Narcotic drug use
- Major disease outbreaks
- Financial pressures on health and welfare systems
- Social and technological transformations
- Geopolitical shifts

WHO: steady global voice for health and well-being

- WHO has been in the forefront of improving global health since 1948
- Its values and goals are embedded in its Constitution, and as relevant today as in 1948
- Global health governance builds on those values, including the right to health and the recognition that health is essential to social, economic and sustainable development

If WHO did not exist, it should have been established by now

- Compared to other global players, it has unique convening power
- It is a truly multilateral organization, with democratic decision-making in its governing bodies and decentralized structures
- Above all, WHO is its Member States, which brings ownership and commitment to change

WHO – six core functions



1. Providing leadership on global health matters
2. Shaping the health research agenda
3. Setting norms and standards
4. Articulating evidence-based policy options
5. Providing technical support to countries
6. Monitoring and assessing health trends

WHO reform – adapting to the changing landscape of public health governance

- Contribute to improved health outcomes and greater coherence in global health
- Create an organization that pursues excellence, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, transparency and accountability



WHO in the 21st century

- Role of WHO in the global health architecture – enhanced by reform process
- A top priority – forging partnerships for health and sustainable development
- One WHO – regions working together
- Closer to countries' needs and realities
- Increasing appreciation of health in foreign policy and international health diplomacy

Health 2020

European policy framework for supporting action across government and society for health and well-being



Health 2020: laying the foundation for a healthier European Region

- Importance of shared governance for health at all levels supporting whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches
- Partnership-based vision engaging governments, nongovernmental and civil-society organizations, the private sector, science and academe, health professionals, communities – and every individual
- A key goal: systematically strengthening partnerships

Working with the European Union

Strong foundation, significant opportunities and additional benefits

- Joint declaration of the European Commission and WHO – six roadmaps for action



Working with other important international partners

Strengthening cooperation between WHO and international organizations, such as:

- United Nations agencies
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Council of Europe
- Development agencies and funds, and major nongovernmental organizations

New and evolving types of partnerships for health

- South-eastern Europe Health Network
- Northern Dimension Policy
- WHO European Healthy Cities Network, national Healthy Cities networks and Regions for Health Network
- WHO settings networks, including those for schools, workplaces, hospitals and prisons
- Health diplomacy

Working with civil society is key

- Civil-society organizations act from the local to the global level and significantly shape the agendas for health and its social determinants.
- Their contribution is therefore valuable for Health 2020 implementation at all levels.

On track, but not there yet

