

---

01

A photograph of a forest floor covered in fallen yellow and orange leaves. The sun is shining brightly from the upper left, creating a lens flare effect and illuminating the scene. The trees are tall and thin, with their trunks visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is warm and autumnal.



# Overview

This overview sets out the aims and target audiences of the 2015 European health report, provides information about the Health 2020 monitoring framework – the backbone of the report – and outlines the content of the main chapters.

## Aims and target audiences

The European health report is issued every three years as a flagship publication by the WHO Regional Office for Europe. The main aims of this 2015 report are to:

- report on progress towards the Health 2020 targets in the Region so far;
- highlight new frontiers in health information and evidence to be addressed in the coming years to optimize health monitoring for Health 2020 and beyond, including subjective well-being measurements.

Given the strong focus on progress towards the Health 2020 policy targets, policy-makers are the main target audience for this report. Nevertheless, since it also addresses the epidemiological situation in the European Region and health information needs and innovations, the report will also be of interest to other users of health information such as public health experts, academic institutions, media groups, nongovernmental organizations and

associations of patients and health professionals. In addition to the full report, a short publication of highlights is also available (1).

## The Health 2020 monitoring framework

Health 2020 was adopted as the new European health policy framework in 2012 by the 53 Member States in the Region during the sixty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe. It supports action across government and society to improve significantly the health and well-being of populations, reduce health inequities, strengthen public health and ensure people-centred health systems that are universal, equitable, sustainable and of high quality. Its four priority areas are to:

- invest in health through a life-course approach and empower citizens;
- tackle Europe's major disease burdens of noncommunicable and communicable diseases;
- strengthen people-centred health systems and public health capacity, including preparedness and response capacity for dealing with emergencies;
- create supportive environments and resilient communities (2).

To monitor the impact of the implementation of Health 2020, a framework was developed in close collaboration with Member States; it was approved in 2013 during the sixty-third session of the Regional Committee. This monitoring framework consists of areas, targets, quantifications and core indicators (see Table 1.1) (3). The core indicators inform the Health 2020 monitoring process at the regional level; additional indicators are also provided for use alongside them to inform national target-setting and monitor progress at the national level in a more comprehensive way. In total, the framework consists of 37 indicators: 19 core (some of which serve more than one target) and 18 additional indicators. The Health 2020 indicators were developed by two dedicated expert groups including national representatives. More information about the Health 2020 monitoring framework and its development is provided in Annex 1.

## Progress towards the Health 2020 targets

Chapter 2 assesses the extent to which progress has been made towards the targets defined in the Health 2020 monitoring framework, using the 2010 baseline set by countries as a reference point. It describes regional trends and intercountry differences for the Health 2020 core indicators. In some instances additional indicators are also described to provide a more comprehensive picture. The epidemiological information is enriched by inspiring good practice examples from countries and overviews of policy progress in the Region.

One of the principles for developing the Health 2020 monitoring framework – a pragmatic decision to keep it concise and prevent duplication – was to exclude targets and indicators already part of existing WHO or other agreed policy frameworks. Exceptions to this rule are the first quantification for the Health 2020 target

Table 1.1. Overview of the Health 2020 monitoring framework

Area	Target	Quantification	Core indicators
Burden of disease and risk factors	Reduce premature mortality in Europe	Reduction of premature mortality	Premature mortality, tobacco use, alcohol consumption, overweight/obesity
		Elimination of vaccine-preventable diseases	Vaccination coverage for measles/rubella and polio
		Reduction of mortality from external causes	Mortality rate from external causes
Healthy people, well-being and determinants	Increase life expectancy in Europe	Increase in life expectancy	Life expectancy at birth
	Reduce inequities in Europe	Reduction in the gaps in health status associated with social determinants	Infant mortality, life expectancy at birth, proportion of children not enrolled in primary school, unemployment rate, (sub)national policy addressing health inequities, GINI coefficient (income distribution)
	Enhance the well-being of the European population	To be set	Life satisfaction, social support, population with improved sanitation facilities, GINI coefficient (income distribution), unemployment rate, proportion of children not enrolled in primary school
Processes, governance and health systems	Universal coverage and right to health	Moving towards universal coverage	Private households' out-of-pocket payments on health, vaccination coverage for measles/rubella and polio, total health expenditure
	National targets or goals set by Member States	Establishment of processes for the purpose of setting national targets	Establishment of process for target-setting, national policies aligned with Health 2020

on reducing premature mortality and the related core indicators, which are also part of the WHO global noncommunicable disease (NCD) monitoring framework (4). Given their importance for the European Region, these were deemed essential for the Health 2020 framework: it was decided to keep them but to align them with the global framework. The consequence of not repeating other existing targets and indicators is that the Health 2020 monitoring framework does not cover all public health areas relevant to the European Region and within the remit of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, since some are monitored by different policy frameworks. As a result, Chapter 2 does not cover the full spectrum of public health: it only focuses on those areas and topics addressed in the Health 2020 monitoring framework and not those monitored via other policy frameworks such as the European Action Plan for HIV/AIDS 2012–2015 and the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health (5,6).

## Well-being and its cultural contexts

Health 2020 covers three main areas (see Table 1.1), one of which includes well-being. Building on the foundations of the 2012 European health report, which sought to identify initial indicators for monitoring well-being within the context of Health 2020, those indicators have now been tested and applied. Chapter 3 presents findings and questions to be addressed to develop this new area of public health.

Although a lot of work continues to take place in countries and international organizations, indicators to measure and monitor well-being are still in development. What has become clear, however, is that well-being measuring and monitoring activities have their own specific challenges, as they involve not only objective but also subjective measures. Working with subjective measures is notoriously challenging: it raises questions about the comprehensibility and feasibility of measurement tools across population groups and the influence of cultural bias; these in turn raise questions about the interpretation and comparability of subjective measures. Chapter 3 looks at these issues in detail, focusing on how culture influences well-being measurements and highlighting developmental work in this field.

## New frontiers in health information and evidence

Chapter 4 examines the need for further health information and evidence to improve monitoring of the implementation and impact of Health 2020. It summarizes the challenges and opportunities identified in Chapters 2–3 and places these in a broader context by addressing information and evidence needs beyond Health 2020 and establishing links with existing work and promising developments in the Region. It addresses issues related to established, traditional data collections and indicators, as well as future information and evidence needs.