



World Health
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Europe

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION in

HUNGARY





Welcome from the Regional Director

Welcome to WHO. Health is our most precious asset. WHO's goal is to ensure better health for everyone, everywhere. We touch people's lives – making sure the air we breathe, and the food and water we consume is safe; ensuring all have access to effective health systems; safeguarding the quality of medicines and vaccines; combatting diseases and protecting people from health threats. WHO works with governments, organizations, communities and individuals to promote health throughout our lives. We all benefit socially, economically and environmentally from a world that seeks health for all and nowhere is our work more critical than at country level. We look forward to working with you to make this our common goal.

Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab
WHO Regional Director for Europe

Who we are

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the global authority on public health within the United Nations. Founded in 1948, we collaborate with the governments of 194 Member States to ensure the highest attainable level of health for all. Currently, more than 7000 people work in 150 country offices, 6 regional offices and at the headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The Organization's work is guided by the principle that health is a human right, and we seek to extend universal health coverage, protect people from health emergencies, and ensure that all people enjoy better health and well-being.

Hungary is part of the WHO European Region, which comprises 53 countries: this Region covers a vast geographical area reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. WHO staff in the Region are public health, scientific and technical experts, based in the Regional Office in Copenhagen, Denmark, in five technical centres and in country offices in 30 Member States.

WHO has worked with the Government of Hungary since the WHO Country Office was established in Budapest in 1991. We endeavour to build a better, healthier future for the people of Hungary.

How we work

As part of the United Nations system, WHO's core function is to direct, coordinate and provide leadership on international health. We articulate ethical and evidence-based policy options, and set norms and standards, promoting and monitoring their implementation. WHO also stimulates the generation, translation and dissemination of knowledge, builds sustainable institutional capacity and monitors and assesses health trends. One of our core functions is to support emergency preparedness and response.

Working in countries, WHO plays an important role in advocating for health at the highest political level, communicating about important health issues and motivating actors across sectors to take action for better health. We bring partners together and lead among United Nations agencies working towards attaining the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In Hungary the country team draws on the technical expertise of all three levels of the Organization. Our strong presence and capacity at country level ensures that our support is relevant and effective. WHO's global network also enables other countries to learn and benefit from the experiences and expertise in Hungary.

Partnerships and collaborations

As part of our role to direct and coordinate international health work, WHO promotes collaboration, mobilizes partnerships and galvanizes the efforts of different health actors to respond to national and global health challenges.

In Hungary our primary partner is the Ministry of Human Capacities. We also collaborate closely with other national authorities and stakeholders, as well as civil society, health workers, academic institutions and international organizations.



Hungary in brief

Population size

9.8 million



Average life expectancy



72.7



79.8

Maternal mortality rate

5

deaths per 100 000 live births

Top three health challenges in the country:

- 1** reducing the burden of NCDs
- 2** strengthening health systems governance, including financial protection and equity in health
- 3** improving public health capacities and services

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) account for

94%

of all deaths

Message from the WHO Representative

In my role as the WHO Representative in Hungary, I have seen the importance of firmly rooting our work in the country's needs and context, making sure our collaboration with the Government and other partners promotes better health for all.

Hungary is a country with solid institutions. This makes it possible for our cooperation to focus on policy dialogue, utilizing the evidence we produce together through joint assessments and reviews. Together we advocate for and develop policies and legislative acts that have an important impact on the health of the population.

NCDs account for the vast majority of deaths in the country. We know that healthier lifestyles can help us reverse the growing trend of NCD-related deaths, morbidities and disabilities, but fighting NCDs goes far beyond the healthy choices an individual can make. To promote systemic change, WHO is working closely with the Government to put in place laws and regulations that help communities and families prioritize healthier foods, stop smoking, do more exercise and consume less alcohol.

In facilitating policy development and dialogue on key areas of public health and health system strengthening, such as the prevention of NCDs, antimicrobial resistance, social determinants of health or health system performance assessment, I believe the process is as important as the end result. Through participative and inclusive methods of bringing partners and practitioners together from all relevant sectors and many parts of the country, we ensure national ownership. This approach also empowers health professionals and scientists, as they see their practical experiences acknowledged in the policy-making process.

Hungary is WHO's close collaborator and partner in a number of ways. Many Hungarian experts contribute to our work in other European countries, especially in the areas of nutrition, evidence-informed policy-making, health financing, tuberculosis prevention and health system performance assessment.

Hungary also plays an important role in matters of global health. For example, Hungary has strongly championed the WHO–United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Protocol on Water and Health since becoming a Party to it in 2001. Hungary was also one of the key countries involved in setting the foundation for creating the SDGs in 2015, and continues to actively promote the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes putting the achievement of universal health coverage at the heart of all our efforts.

In building on our strong collaboration and taking these steps towards a healthier future for Hungary, we are guided by the principles of the SDGs and Health 2020, the European policy framework for health and well-being. I am committed to working with the Government of Hungary to make all Hungarians healthier, leaving no one behind.

Dr Ledia Lazeri
WHO Representative in Hungary



WHO – saving lives and ensuring health for all

WHO's collaboration with the Government of Hungary seeks to address some of the root causes behind the rising number of deaths due to NCDs, such as unhealthy nutrition. In the past years, WHO has supported a complex set of interventions that include the Public Health Product Tax introduced in 2011, the Public Catering Decree, approved in 2014, as well as the ongoing work on the ban of trans fats in Hungarian food products.

One concrete example of how this comprehensive approach is making Hungarians healthier is the set of positive changes seen in both schools and the food industry, as a result of the Public Catering Decree.

The Decree consists of a package of innovative public health measures that tackle unhealthy diets, above all in educational settings. Three years after its introduction, according to the assessment by the National Institute of Pharmacy and Nutrition, supported by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, children are served healthier meals in schools and the nutritional industry regards healthier food choices more favourably than before the Decree was passed.

The positive changes observed in schools between 2013 and 2017 include the following:

- Caterers in 90% of primary schools complied with the regulations on sugar, energy and fat content.
- The country saw an increase from 47% to 82% of schools with more servings of fruit and vegetables (once or more a day).
- Whereas in 2013 all schools used deep frying in cooking, in 2017 only 33% continued to do so.
- The number of school snack shops selling sugar-sweetened beverages or cola drinks, prepackaged sweets, chocolate, biscuits or wafers significantly decreased.

All the above mentioned interventions have been widely endorsed by the public health community and are used as good practices for other countries to follow.



Making our work possible

As Hungary works towards achieving the SDGs, investing in WHO will help protect and promote the health of the poorest and most disadvantaged.

Hungary both benefits from WHO's technical assistance and contributes to the Organization's work in a variety of ways. One example is the WHO Budapest Centre, an outpost of WHO headquarters, which Hungary has hosted and financed since 2016. The Centre's current functions include the administration of internal justice, as well as the management of long-term agreements and procurement arrangements for WHO globally.

Globally, WHO is transforming to make the Organization more effective and efficient, placing country work even more at its centre. Predictable and flexible funding from our partners for global, regional and country level priorities will be crucially important to our success. A full breakdown of the financing and implementation progress in Hungary can be found on the WHO Programme Budget Portal: <http://open.who.int/2018-19/home>



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