

Statement of the European Respiratory Society (ERS)

WHO Europe 66th Regional Committee meeting

12 – 15 September, 2016, Copenhagen

Referring to WHO Europe RC 66 Agenda Item:

Action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in the WHO European Region (2016-2025)

Statement:

The European Respiratory Society fully supports the work done by the WHO European Region and praises the WHO Europe for the development of a new action plan on non-communicable diseases.

There is an awful lot we can do in Europe both to prevent but also to control NCDs. This WHO Action Plan is a great start.

There are 4 elements we believe are particularly important:

Firstly, it is with great satisfaction that we note the willingness for further efforts in the ratification and comprehensive implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, such as the progress on plain packaging. Personally, I am also very happy with the progress witnessed in several countries with regards to plain packaging and higher tobacco taxes. We hope such positive measures will be adopted by more and more WHO Europe Member States.

Secondly, we are pleased to see air pollution included in the plan, as this is the most significant environmental determinant affecting non-communicable diseases, especially for diseases such as asthma and COPD.

Thirdly, recognition of the importance of epigenetics and of a life course approach to health policy. Diseases such as Asthma and COPD are characterized by considerable social and health inequalities and the identification of the need for better housing, living and working standards in the entire region, is of vital importance.

Lastly, we particularly welcome the emphasis given to early detection as well as vaccination as means to achieve better health outcomes, lower health costs and reduce exacerbations, which is particularly important for respiratory chronic diseases such as COPD.

As a scientific society, ERS is committed to continue working alongside WHO to implement this action plan and achieve better health for all.