



Newsletter

A periodical publication of the SEE Health Network
Issue 1 - September 2010



SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
HEALTH NETWORK

The SEE Health Network was established in 2001 and consists of the Ministries of Health of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.



Dr Petrit Vasili
Minister of Health,
Albania

Old Story - New Challenges

Dear friends,
It is a pleasure and privilege to write on behalf of the Presidency of the SEE Health Network in this first issue of the Newsletter. After 10 years of successful regional cooperation in health in the SEE, the Network is entering a new phase. With the successful completion of quite a few challenges, most of the regional projects, following the legacy of the Dubrovnik (2001) and Skopje (2005) Pledges, a new operational Secretariat will be established in the region, followed by a series of Regional Health

Continued on page 5

Contents

Old Story - New Challenges	1
Regional Cooperation and Health in the SEE	1
Public health for peace, health and wealth	1
10 years on, the real beauty of the SEEHN lies in what it is now capable of offering others	1
The SEE Health Network in 2010	2
Financing social projects in South Eastern Europe	2
SEEHN: The Way Forward	3
SEEHN Representation	6

Regional Cooperation and Health in SEE

During the past decade, the countries of South East Europe (SEE) have made strides towards building peace and stability and creating better living conditions for their citizens. Many initiatives have emerged that promote and implement regional cooperation in different areas. While a positive trend has been witnessed across the board in terms of regional ownership and strengthened cooperation, the achievements of the SEE Health Network stand out and set a good example to be followed by other initiatives.



Mr Hido Biš evi
Secretary General
Regional Cooperation
Council

Continued on page 4

Upcoming Events

- Operational Secretariat established in Skopje, Nov 2010
- 24th SEEHN meeting in Tirana, Nov 2010
- 25th SEEHN meeting in Skopje, Inauguration of the Secretariat, Jan 2011



Ms Zsuzsanna Jakab
Regional Director
WHO Regional
Office for Europe

Public health for peace, health and wealth

The 53 countries in the WHO European Region of WHO, are diverse yet share fundamental values such as human rights, universality, equity, solidarity, health gain, participation and access to quality health care. There are gaps in health experience and health system development, as well as public health services development both between and within countries. The challenge is to close these gaps, while at the same time responding to citizens' expectations of better health and good quality and efficient health services.

To respond to these challenges, The WHO Regional

Continued on page 5

10 years on, the real beauty of the SEEHN lies in what it is now capable of offering others

The Council of Europe is proud that together with the WHO and the Council of Europe Development Bank it has taken part since the inception of the Network in a true partnership spanning solidarity, equity and efficiency. Bringing people together from different regions was the first important step in the process. But today we can say that the Network has moved on: from commitment to cooperation, from declarations to deeds. Interim steps have all contributed to building up the Network: health and social cohesion were happily placed



Mr Alexander Vladychenko
Director, General of Social
Cohesion Directorate (DG III)
Council of Europe

Continued on page 4



Dr Bujar Osmani
Minister of Health,
Republic of
Macedonia

The SEE Health Network in 2010

Dear colleagues,

On the occasion of the first issue of the SEE Health Network newsletter I would like to inform you on the implementation of our MoU:

- We have committed to cooperating in health in the SEE and with our partners,
- We have committed to strengthening and expanding the partnership internationally,
- We have committed to support financially the activities of the SEEHN.

On establishing the new Secretariat in Skopje:

- We are in the process of signing the Host Agreement,
- We are in the process of preparing the facility of the Seat and seconding two experts to the Secretariat,
- We have secured political and technical support from our historical partners.

We can say that as of today we are running the sub-regional cooperation according to our political and financial commitments. It is important to state these successes and to reflect upon the challenges in front of us. The Network is our monitoring and evaluation tool. We have nominated the Regional Health Development Centers, we have regional programs running, and, the Third Ministers of Health Forum in 2011.

Our partners are with us and we need to lead the way and mainstream the technical aid they are so willing to offer. Looking forward to our future joint activities.

"...as of today we are running the sub-regional cooperation according to our political and financial commitments..."



Mr Imre Tarafás
Vice-Governor
Council of Europe
Development Bank

Financing social projects in South Eastern Europe

Ever since the establishment of the South Eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN), the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) has been part of the efforts to foster the provision of health services in South Eastern Europe (SEE). Within the CEB's unique mandate to finance social projects to improve living conditions and promote social cohesion in Europe, particular attention is paid to the health sector. In the past years, expanding operations in the SEE countries has been one of the Bank's highest priorities. In the health sector, the total amount of approved loans for the SEE region is worth some €200 million, for projects located in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova and Romania. The leverage effect of CEB financing is considerable and can be estimated at a factor of 2.5, given that the amounts approved by the CEB represent on average 40% of the total volume of the actual investments. It can be assumed that CEB loans of €200 million have mobilised at least €500 million of total investments.

While CEB's mission is to invest in social infrastructure through loans at favourable interest rates, we have also devoted some of our limited grant resources to the SEEHN. We have been pleased to contribute, through the Norway Trust Account established with the CEB, to the implementation of the assessment of public health services performance in the SEE region. The results of this work will be presented in the upcoming joint WHO/CEB publication (2010) "Evaluation of public health services in South Eastern Europe". This marks an important step forward in understanding the challenges faced by the countries of the region in reforming and developing their health systems, as well as the opportunities available to them to improve the health of their populations.

Regarding the future, CEB will remain strongly committed to financing social projects in the SEE countries, including those in the health sector. Increasingly coordinated at the European level, CEB will be part of the necessary international support to promote sustainable social development in the region.

"...CEB will remain strongly committed to financing social projects in the SEE countries, including the health sector..."

SEE Health Network - The Way Forward

Dear reader,

It is my intense pleasure to write, on this first issue of our Newsletter, on behalf of the SEE Health Network Executive Committee. During the past 5 years the Executive Committee has managed the activities of the SEEHN, supporting the rotating presidencies and working together with the Secretariat (provided jointly by WHO/Europe and CoE).

It is with pride that I look at our accomplishments and the plans for the future. The new Secretariat will soon become operational in Skopje, during October 2010, as we have the first 5 signatures to the Host Agreement. More Regional Health Development Centers are expected to be established in the region, completing the transition from regional projects into long-term programs in the SEE region.

Our accomplishments through the years would have not been possible without the generous support and leadership of our partner countries and international organizations. On behalf of the Executive Committee I would like to say thank you to all the friends and colleagues that have been part of the SEEHN, representing their home countries and organizations they work for: Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Looking forward to the future, I can say it looks promising and challenging at the same time. A new area opens in front of the Network, filled with exiting things to do and new achievements to accomplish. But we are confident that the self standing Network has a good and sound foundation, forged through the years with the help of our partners and members in the spirit of good regional cooperation. Looking forward to meeting you in Tirana soon!



Ms Snezana Cicevalieva
Chair, Executive Committee
SEE Health Network

*"...a new area opens up
in front of the
Network..."*

Contributions of the host country to the SEE Health Network Secretariat seat (as listed in the proposal submitted in May 2009)

Basic Requirements:

- a) Legal status: diplomatic status to the head of the Sec and all staff
- b) Exemptions from taxes: exempt from VAT (at 18%)
- c) Exemptions, other:
 - i. from immigration restrictions,
 - ii. income tax
 - iii. social security contributions
- d) Premises:
 - i. Facility area 100 m², 1 km from center, free of charge for whole duration of Sec, available immediately after signing of the Host Agreement
 - ii. Costs for maintaining the offices, and landline and internet expenses (but not cel phones)
 - iii. Equipment: 4 computers, 2 printers, 1 copier, 1 scanner, 1 fax, 4 tables, 4 chairs, 4 shelves, two tables and 10 chairs in the meeting room
- e) Financial contribution – 1 time only – 60,000 Euros
- f) Transportation – 1 vehicle (plus maintenance costs but not for spare parts)

* two seconded officials to assist with Secretariat functions

Secretariat Timeline





Mr Alexander Vladychenko
Director, General of Social
Cohesion Directorate (DG III)
Council of Europe

10 years on, the real beauty of the SEEHN lies in what it is now capable of offering others

Continued from page 1

on the agenda of the Stability Pact, which resulted in the creation of the Social Cohesion Initiative of the Stability Pact. Lying at the roots of ensuing successes was the strong Secretariat support from donors who decided to invest in health and peace. A vital factor in the growing strength of the Network came in the form of local expertise and continued political support, which allowed the Network to reach for sustainability and self-governance. These two elements figure at the core of the “Skopje Pledge”.

Clearly, the regional projects will allow the health systems to catch up with the current level of development in greater Europe. But this is ultimately only a part of the overall picture.

The 47 member states of the Council of Europe have benefited from a two-way Network traffic, one where at the outset partners provided support and expertise. This has now developed into a flow emanating from the Network, offering numerous resources to be shared with others. A precedent has been set: the Network is a model example for regional policy cooperation which should be made widely known and applied in other regions and sectors.

The regional notion of “balkanisation” is changing – from a synonym of fragmentation, partition and conflicts towards a model of cooperation. To build an enlarged, safer Europe we must use this language of health and peace, of social cohesion and human rights to overcome the difficult past and to build a better future for generations to come.

Network members: you may be proud of your achievements.

"... 'balkanisation' is changing from a synonym of fragmentation, partition and conflicts towards a model of cooperation ..."

Regional Cooperation and Health in SEE

Continued from page 1



Mr Hido Biš evi
Secretary General
Regional Cooperation
Council

Regional cooperation in the health sector has produced important results. The network has successfully implemented regional action in several key fields, such as safe food products, mental health services, blood transfusion, tobacco control, maternal and neonatal health, communicable diseases and public health school. They all aim at improving public health systems across SEE.

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) fully supports enhanced regional ownership and cooperation on health and health-related projects. In this respect, we commend the SEEHN members for their efforts towards establishing a regional secretariat and for transforming regional health projects into long-term regional programs for cooperation.

The RCC actively participates in the Network meetings and has provided continued political support and promotion. The Memorandum of Understanding on the cooperation between the RCC Secretariat and the SEEHN, concluded in April 2009, sets a clear platform for strengthening our relationship. The RCC will continue to back the SEEHN, as well as play its coordinating and networking role with other relevant initiatives, while actively advocating for funding of identified regional project needs.

This newsletter is a timely step forward in informing the stakeholders and the general public of results of regional health efforts, and for creating a platform for a continued dialogue in this area.

"...this newsletter is a timely step forward ..."



Ms Zsuzsanna Jakab
Regional Director
WHO Regional
Office for Europe

Public health for peace, health and wealth

Continued from page 1

Office for Europe is implementing a vision for improving health in Europe, so that it can better support its Member States by strengthening its leadership role in public health and health policy, and by engaging in and supporting partnerships and coalitions to reduce inequities and achieve “better health for Europe”.

The South Eastern Europe Health Network emerged and developed in the last nine years as a unique coalition for public health of the Governments of nine countries in the European region. By implementing concerted and national actions in agreed public health areas in true partnership with 10 bilateral partners and four intergovernmental organizations the ministries of health of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Republic of Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia implement modern public health policies and health system reforms that are slowly but firmly leading to improving the health of their populations. Thus, they implement successfully the commitments of their Dubrovnik (2001) and Skopje (2005) Pledges and their Memorandum of Understanding of 2009.

Since its commencement in 2001 the Network has developed as one of the flagship initiatives not only under the umbrella of the Stability Pact process and later the Regional Cooperation Council but is playing an exemplary role in the European region proving that cooperation in public health is also a driving force for peace building, economic development and health improvement.

To date, the SEE Health Network has entered its second and more advanced phase of development aiming towards full ownership and sustainability of the regional cooperation process. The establishment of the Network’s own institutions and cooperation mechanisms is coming to its end which will secure its independence and leadership. The WHO Regional Office for Europe highly commends these developments.

Having been one of the founding and leading organizations, WHO Regional Office for Europe is fully committed to continue to be a key partner to the SEE Health Network and will provide continuous political and technical support to foster the health improvement process in the future.

“...cooperation in public health is a driving force for peace building, economic development and health improvement ...”



Dr Petrit Vasili
Minister of Health,
Albania

Old Story - New Challenges

Continued from page 1

Development Centers, as stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding on the future of the SEE Health Network (2009).

We are looking ahead to a new and exiting period of new challenges on regional cooperation, under the political umbrella of the Regional Cooperation Council, and to increasing the number of members and partners to the Network. The 3rd Ministers of Health Forum (Sarajevo, June 2011) will be another jewel in the crown of the regional cooperation in health in the SEE, and the presidency of Albania (July-December 2010) will provide all the necessary political and technical support to the process.

The Forum focusing on “Health in All Policies” will provide another momentum to the health development in the SEE beyond 2010.

The final word is to extend, on behalf of the Network, our appreciation and gratitude to all the partner countries and agencies for the long-term support provided, especially to the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Council of Europe, and the Council of Europe Development Bank for a job well done.

Looking forward to meeting you in Albania in November 2010!

SEE Health Network Achievements

1. Peace building and stabilization
2. Development, improvement and alignment of health legislation with WHO and European legislation
3. Capacity-building
4. A strong feeling of ownership, trust and confidence
5. Spirit of openness, transparency and accountability
6. Establishment of strong partnerships

SEEHN - Major political documents

Memorandum of Understanding, 2009.

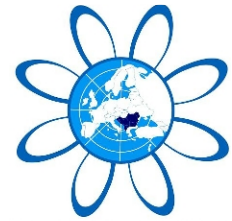
Legally binding document signed by the governments of nine countries, establishing the institutional mechanisms for sustaining the regional cooperation on health development

Skopje Pledge, 2005.

Cornerstone agreement on cross-border health development in south-eastern Europe

Dubrovnik Pledge, 2001.

Agreement among countries on meeting the health needs of vulnerable populations in south-eastern Europe



SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
HEALTH NETWORK

Members:

Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Republic of Moldova
Montenegro
Romania
Serbia
The Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia

Donors and Neighbours:

Belgium
France
Greece
Hungary
Israel
Italy
Norway
Slovenia
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

Organizations:

Council of Europe
Council of Europe
Development Bank
WHO Regional Office
for Europe

23rd meeting of SEE Health Network, Ohrid, June 2010



Meetings

SEEHN 21st meeting, Bucharest, June 2009
SEEHN 22nd meeting, Belgrade, November 2009
SEEHN 23rd meeting, Ohrid, June 2010
SEEHN 24th meeting, Tirana, November 2010

SEEHN Representation

Presidency: Albania (Jul-Dec 2010)
Executive Committee:
Ms Snezana Cicevalieva, Chair
Dr Elizabet Paunovic, SRB
Dr Goran Cerkez, BiH
Dr Alexandre Berlin, Intl
Dr Athanasios Constantopoulos, Intl

Secretariat:
Dr Maria Haralanova, WHO/Europe
Dr Piotr Mierzewski, CoE

National Health Coordinators:

ALB - Dr Klodian Rjepaj
BiH - Dr Goran Cerkez
Dr Milan Latinovic
BUL - Ms Desislava Dimitrova
CRO - Dr Vlasta Hrabak-Zerjavic
MNE - Ms Mirjana Djuranovic
MDA - Dr Octavian Grama
ROM - Dr Adriana Galan
SRB - Dr Elizabet Paunovic
MKD - Ms Snezana Cicevalieva

This issue was prepared by SEE Health Network Secretariat in cooperation with the Ministries of Health of Albania, Republic of Macedonia, the Regional Cooperation Council, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, and the SEEHN Executive Committee. Please address your comments, suggestions and requests via email to sehnsec@gmail.com. We would like to hear from you with comments or suggestions on this issue. We also welcome suggestions or contributions for the second issue. The SEEHN Secretariat welcomes requests for permission to reproduce or translate its publications, in part or in full.