



Report of the sixth meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF)

29-30 November 2016

Vienna, Austria



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

Sixth meeting of the
European Environment and
Health Task Force (EHTF)

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Abstract

The sixth meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) took place in Vienna, Austria on 29 and 30 November 2016. The EHTF members held a joint session with participants in the International Youth Conference which was attended by four ministers of the Austrian Government. They were informed of progress in the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, to be held in Ostrava, Czech Republic, on 13–15 June 2017. They discussed initial drafts of the ministerial declaration and implementation plan for the Conference, and suggested detailed amendments. They further discussed possible future institutional arrangements for the European Environment and Health Process.

Keywords

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Acknowledgements

The meeting was generously hosted by the Government of Austria.

Opening of the meeting, election of officers and adoption of the agenda

1. The sixth meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) took place in Vienna, Austria on 29 and 30 November 2016, at the kind invitation of the Government of Austria. See Annex 1 for the scope and purpose of the meeting, Annex 2 for the programme of work, Annex 3 for the short report circulated for approval immediately after the meeting and Annex 4 for the list of participants. The meeting was chaired by Dragan Gjorgjev (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Robert Thaler (Austria).

Joint session with participants in the International Youth Conference on Environment, Health and Mobility

2. Immediately prior to the formal EHTF meeting, a joint session took place with participants in the International Youth Conference on Environment, Health and Mobility, held in Vienna from 27 to 29 November. Austrian Ministers and senior representatives of international organizations took part in a discussion moderated by Christa Kummer of Austrian TV.
3. Andrä Rupprechter, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria, said that Austria strongly supported youth participation at both national and international levels, in particular within the European Environment and Health Process and the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP). Sabine Oberhauser, Federal Minister of Health and Women's Affairs, stressed the important lessons which the older generation could learn from young people, while Sophie Karmasin, Federal Minister of Families and Youth, commended the non-authoritarian environment provided by informal youth activities, where young people could learn practical skills. Samo Kobenter, Director-General for Sports, Federal Ministry of National Defence and Sport, said that his Ministry sought to encourage everyone to engage in sport from a young age, since it was healthy and enjoyable and promoted social contact. Jörg Leichtfried, Federal Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology, emphasized the importance of transport policies which encouraged people to walk, cycle or use public transport, both for improving the health of the individual and for reducing environmental pollution.
4. Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe, commended the whole-of-government approach demonstrated so clearly by the Government of Austria in the organization of the International Youth Conference, while Marco Keiner, Director Environment Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), welcomed the active promotion of youth participation by the Austrian Government.

Involving youth representatives in decision-making and implementation of actions related to environment and health

5. Dovile Adamonyte, European Environment and Health Youth Coalition, introduced the Vienna Youth Position Paper on Environment and Health 2016,¹ endorsed by the International Youth Conference and intended as a contribution by young people to the preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, to be held in Ostrava, Czech Republic, in June 2017. David Neuber of the Austrian National Youth Council described the legal basis for youth participation in government and parliamentary consultations in Austria and called upon governments to take young people seriously and take advantage of their expertise and enthusiasm for shaping the society of the future. Andrä Rupprechter, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry,

¹ Vienna youth position paper on environment and health 2016. Vienna: European Environment and Health Youth Coalition; 2016 (<http://www.eehyc.org/iyv/>, accessed 6 March 2017).

Environment and Water Management, Austria, promised that youth delegates would be included in Austria's delegation to the Sixth Ministerial Conference.

Youth project award ceremony

6. Andrä Rupprechter presented awards to seven youth mobility projects under the “klimaaktiv mobil” initiative of the Austrian Government, which also promotes environmentally friendly youth mobility projects. The projects showed individual enthusiasm and entrepreneurial potential and would serve as models of good practice for future projects.

Opening of the Task Force meeting

7. Zsuzsanna Jakab formally opened the EHTF meeting, commending the leadership of the Austrian Government in the European Environment and Health Process over the previous 20 years. She also stressed that Austria would host the fifth high-level meeting of THE PEP in 2019. She welcomed a representative of the European Committee of the Regions, which had recently signed a memorandum of understanding with WHO, and thanked Dragan Gjorgjev and Robert Thaler, currently Co-Chair of the EHTF, for their leadership and guidance since the Mid-term Review of the Process, held in Haifa, Israel in April 2015.
8. The key messages of the Mid-term Review had been, first, that work should continue on the commitments which remained unfulfilled from the Parma Declaration, adopted at the Fifth Ministerial Conference. Second, participants had called for a streamlined and transparent preparatory process for the Sixth Ministerial Conference. That process had been facilitated by regular meetings of the open-ended Ad-Hoc Working Group and an online consultation process, which would be supplemented by political consultations scheduled for February 2017. Third, participants had called for greater political engagement by more Member States: an external evaluation and interviews with Member States had been conducted to explore the guiding principles for the creation of new institutional arrangements for the Process which would be robust, politically visible and legitimized by strong links with the two policy-making bodies responsible for environment and health – the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the Committee on Environmental Policy of UNECE.
9. Fourth, the Sixth Ministerial Conference should produce a robust outcome document, with a limited number of commitments based on the road map endorsed by the participants in the Mid-term Review¹ and on subsequent consultations and technical meetings. The Secretariat had prepared a new draft of the ministerial declaration which would form the outcome document of the Sixth Ministerial Conference (document EURO/EHTF6/6) and a draft implementation plan which was planned to be annex 1 of the ministerial declaration (document EURO/EHTF6/7). The latter laid out seven priority areas, from which each Member State would compile its own portfolio of actions, tailored to its national priorities, in a national action plan to be announced at the Sixth Ministerial Conference.
10. She warmly thanked the Government of Czech Republic for hosting the Sixth Ministerial Conference.

Election of officers

11. Robert Thaler of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management was unanimously elected as the new Chair of the EHTF. Member States

¹ Document EURO/EHTF-MTR/08.

were invited to nominate a candidate for Co-Chair from the health sector by 16 December.

Adoption of the agenda

12. The provisional agenda and programme of work of the meeting (document EURO/EHTF6/3) were adopted. The meeting adopted the report of the fifth meeting of the EHTF, held in Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 24 and 25 November 2015.

Reporting and informing

13. Zsuzsanna Jakab reported on the outcome of the sixty-sixth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe. The Regional Committee had adopted the Strategy and action plan for refugee and migrant health and the Action plan for sexual and reproductive health. The midterm progress report on the implementation of the Health 2020 policy framework in 2012–2016 had shown improved health outcomes and a reduction in health inequalities. Member States had asked the Secretariat to develop a road map for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for consideration at the sixty-seventh session in 2017, which would take into account the outcome of the Sixth Ministerial Conference. The Environment and Health Process provided a valuable model of intersectoral action for other processes. The process of global WHO reform was continuing. The WHO Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors had been adopted after four years of negotiations, and the new Health Emergencies Programme was currently being created.
14. Marco Keiner reported on the outcome of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016). The Conference had adopted a Ministerial Declaration, the Pan-European Strategic Framework on Greening the Economy, the Batumi Action on Cleaner Air and further policy instruments on education for sustainable development. The Batumi Action on Cleaner Air was an ambitious programme which aimed to increase monitoring, enhance national action programmes and improve capacity-building and policy development. Proposed measures included the promotion of electric mobility, emission inventories and smartphone applications giving information about air quality.
15. Wondwosen K. Asnake, Programme Management Officer, United Nations Environment Programme, reported on the Second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 2) (Nairobi, Kenya, 23–27 May 2016), which had been devoted to the theme “Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Relevant resolutions included expressions of support for the Paris Agreement on climate change and commitments to action on plastic litter, food waste and sound management of chemicals and waste. Interested parties could contribute to the debate through the knowledge hub myunea.org.
16. Marina Maiero, Technical Officer, Evidence and Policy on Environmental Health, WHO headquarters, reported on the outcome of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Marrakech, Morocco, 7–18 November 2016). The Conference had adopted the Marrakech Action Proclamation for Our Climate and Sustainable Development: participants had called for the creation of a global coalition on health, environment and climate change to address the burden of disease due to environmental factors and increase the synergy of action to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.
17. Dovile Adamonyte gave further details of the participation of the Youth Coalition in the International Youth Conference. Besides the Youth Position Paper, it had prepared a fact

sheet and a proposal for the contribution of young people to the implementation of the future ministerial declaration.

Presenting and negotiating the outcome document of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

18. Srđan Matic, Coordinator, Environment and Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe, thanked the Austrian hosts for their hard work in preparing for the current meeting and commended the efforts of the youth representatives. The road map agreed at the Mid-Term Review in Haifa had been further refined in meetings of the EHTF and Ad-Hoc Working Group, 10 thematic consultations and a first round of consultations with Member States. Further consultations would take place with the Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the EHTF at its seventh meeting, scheduled for April 2017.
19. It was proposed that the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference should comprise a ministerial declaration, an implementation plan in annex 1 of the declaration and a possible annex 2 on the future institutional arrangements for the Environment and Health Process.¹ The proposed activities would be aligned with and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and Health 2020.
20. Participants discussed the draft ministerial declaration and implementation plan and suggested both general and specific amendments.² It was recognized that the diversity in the WHO European Region made it difficult to identify a restricted number of priorities of universal relevance. Some participants called for the number of commitments to be reduced and stressed the importance of continuing work on the outstanding commitments under the Parma Declaration. All commitments should be clearly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additional commitments were suggested, including the health of children and other vulnerable groups; air pollution; chemical hazards, substances of high concern such as asbestos and implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management; climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience; environmental causes of antimicrobial resistance; exposure to electromagnetic radiation; research and human biomonitoring; education for sustainability, including systems thinking; and the promotion of action at the regional and local levels.
21. The Youth Coalition proposed the inclusion of a new priority area calling for the expansion of meaningful youth participation in national and international decision-making and policy development.
22. Participants suggested various amendments to the drafts. The ministerial declaration should be a political document, with aspirational goals which politicians would be willing to endorse but without too much technical detail. It should call upon Member States to accede to and implement other relevant environmental conventions and agreements, which would be listed in an annex. Srđan Matic drew attention to three areas which were of particular concern to WHO as a stakeholder, namely environmentally sustainable health systems, management of hazardous waste and contaminated sites, which were a particular problem in former industrial sites in Europe, and health in cities. Further issues which might be included were equity, social inclusion and social resilience.
23. The current draft of the implementation plan comprised eight priority areas, of which the first, overarching, priority concerned the development of a national portfolio of actions by each Member State. Each priority had a single objective, proposed action, smart

¹ See documents EURO/EHTF6/6, EURO/EHTF6/7 and EURO/EHTF6/8, respectively.

² Written proposals for amendments received before the meeting are shown in document EURO/EHTF6/7bis.

targets and cross-references to the relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. Achievement of the smart targets would be monitored using the data already collected under the Sustainable Development Goals – there would be no separate monitoring system.

24. A number of participants suggested moving the priority areas from the implementation plan to the ministerial declaration, with the remaining recommendations in the implementation plan serving as guidance for Member States in the creation of their national portfolios. Others suggested that all material of political relevance, notably in relation to the added value of the Process, the development of national portfolios of actions and the use of the monitoring system developed for the Sustainable Development Goals, should be incorporated into the declaration. The implementation plan should be leaner and more focused, taking out unnecessary details, such as references to the Sustainable Development Goal targets. It should set general targets but leave Member States to specify their quantitative aspects. Some participants requested the inclusion of recommendations for tools for education, awareness-raising, risk assessment and human biomonitoring.
25. Participants considered a discussion document on the future institutional arrangements for the Environment and Health Process, contained in annex 2 of the draft ministerial declaration (see document EURO/EHTF6/8). Optimum institutional arrangements would support the implementation of national activities. They would require strong links with existing policy-making bodies, namely the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, and should involve a minimal administrative burden.
26. It was generally agreed that a body similar to the EHTF should be maintained, representing all 53 Member States of the WHO European Region and keeping the name “Task Force” in the interests of continuity. Some participants said that the Ad-Hoc Working Group should also be maintained in its current form. The new body should involve high-level political representatives, national representatives from all relevant sectors, young people and civil society organizations. It was suggested that a joint WHO/UNECE Secretariat should be created to serve the new body and that an elected bureau of no more than 8–10 members should steer the work of the Task Force. The members of the new body should have the authority to take decisions on behalf of their governments.
27. Zsuzsanna Jakab acknowledged the importance of ministerial-level involvement, which could be achieved by means of high-level segments at the meetings and/or reporting back on the decisions of the Process to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy. Marco Keiner appreciated the proposal for a joint WHO/UNECE Secretariat, but made it clear that a decision on the proposal would need to be taken by the UNECE governing bodies, taking into consideration its implications in terms of responsibilities, staffing and financing.

Preparing for the Sixth Ministerial Conference

28. Srdan Matic introduced the venue for the Sixth Ministerial Conference in Ostrava, Czech Republic, with the help of a short video. The new Government of Czech Republic had committed itself to making the Conference a success, and legal discussions and practical arrangements were under way. Further discussions on the outcome documents would take place in the Ad-Hoc Working Group in January 2017 and at a further meeting of the EHTF, scheduled for April 2017.

Any other business, summary of decisions and closure of the meeting.

29. Francesca Racioppi, Senior Policy and Programme Adviser, WHO Regional Office for Europe, read out a summary of the discussion and decisions of the meeting.

30. Since there had been no time to discuss the proposed communications action plan for the Sixth Ministerial Conference (document EURO/EHTF6/11), participants agreed to send any comments by email after the meeting.
31. EHTF members were invited to participate in a stakeholder consultation meeting in Utrecht, Netherlands on 13–14 December 2016.
32. Lis Keiding, Specialized Medical Officer from the Danish Health Authority, would be succeeded at the end of 2016 by Pernille Thygesen as the incoming focal point from Denmark representing the health sector. The EHTF expressed its gratitude to Lis Keiding for her many contributions to and support for the Process and welcomed her successor.
33. The EHTF thanked the Austrian Government for its excellent hospitality and thanked Dragan Gjorgiev and Robert Thaler for their very effective chairing of the meeting.
34. Robert Thaler thanked all participants and the staff who had worked on the meeting, and declared the meeting closed at 17:25 on 30 November.

Annex 1. Scope and purpose

The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Parma, Italy in 2010, established the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) as the leading international body for implementation and monitoring of the European Environment and Health Process (EHP).

The EHTF convenes in preparation of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, which will take place in Ostrava, Czech Republic, on 13-15 June 2017. The main purpose of the meeting is to open and advance the preparation and adoption of the political outcome documents of the Ministerial Conference. In particular, the discussion will focus on the following main areas:

1. Reporting and informing: The EHTF will be informed about the main preparatory events for the 6th Ministerial Conference in 2017. The Ad-Hoc Working group will report to the Task Force on its work since the previous EHTF meeting in 2015.
Furthermore, EHTF will be informed about the main outcomes of the discussions held at the International Youth Conference (Vienna, Austria, 27–29 November 2016); the sixty-sixth WHO Regional Committee for Europe (Copenhagen, Denmark, 12–15 September 2016); the Eighth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016); the second United Nations Environment Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya, 23–27 May 2016) and other relevant developments.
2. Negotiating the outcome documents of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health: The EHTF will review and negotiate the draft outcome documents for the Ministerial Conference proposed by the Ad-Hoc Working Group - the Ministerial Declaration and its two Annexes, presenting the implementation plan for the commitments to be taken in Ostrava and the proposed new institutional arrangements for the European Environment and Health Process beyond 2017.
To complement the background to the discussion on the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference, the Secretariat will present the outcomes from the consultations on technical themes that provided the background to the draft outcomes prepared by the Ad-Hoc working group.
3. Preparing for the Ministerial Conference: The EHTF will be informed about relevant aspects concerning the further preparation of the Conference, including the proposed outline of the programme, the communication strategy for the event and the list of forthcoming preparatory meetings and consultations in the run-up to the Conference.

Annex 2. Programme of the meeting

Tuesday, 29 November 2016	
9:30 – 11:30	Registration with welcome refreshments (Exhibition of Youth Projects – Market of Opportunities)
11:30 – 12:25	<p>Opening of the meeting</p> <p>The first session of the EHTF meeting will be held as a joint session with the International Youth Conference</p> <p>Welcome will be given in the format of moderated talks by Christa Kummer, professional moderator, Austrian Broadcasting Corporation. Welcome will be given by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrä Rupprechter, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management • Sabine Oberhauser, Federal Minister of Health and Women’s Affairs • Sophie Karmasin, Federal Minister of Families and Youth • Jörg Leichtfried, Federal Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology • Samo Kobenter, Director General for Sports, Federal Ministry of National Defence and Sport • Marco Keiner, Director Environment Division, UNECE • Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe
12:25 – 12:45	<p>Involving Youth Representatives in decision-making and implementation of actions related to environment and health</p> <p>EHTF will be informed of the main outcomes of the discussions held by the International Youth Conference, hosted by Austria in Vienna on 27-29 November 2016 and on the importance of engaging Youth representatives in decisions and implementation activities related to environment and health – moderated by Christa Kummer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dovile Adamonyte, European Environment and Health Youth Coalition • David Neuber, Austrian National Youth Council
12:45 – 13:00	<p>Youth Project Award Ceremony</p> <p>Moderated by Christa Kummer, within the framework of the klimaaktiv mobil initiative, youth-led projects will be awarded by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrä Rupprechter, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management • Sophie Karmasin, Federal Minister of Families and Youth
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch break (Exhibition of Youth Projects – Market of Opportunities)
14:30 – 15:15	<p>Reporting and informing</p> <p>Welcome by the Task Force Chair. Election of the EHTF Co-Chair, adoption of the agenda and programme, adoption of the report of the Fifth Meeting.</p> <p>The EHTF will be informed about the outcomes of discussions at the sixty-sixth WHO Regional Committee for Europe (Copenhagen, Denmark, 12–15 September 2016), the Eighth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe, held in Batumi, Georgia (8-10 June 2016, as well as at the second United Nations Environment Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya, 23-27 May 2016), as well as of other relevant developments since the Fifth Meeting of the EHTF, held in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 24-25 November 2015.</p> <p><u>Relevant documents:</u></p> <p><i>EHTF6/1 - List of documents</i></p> <p><i>EHTF6/2 - Scope and purpose</i></p> <p><i>EHTF6/3 - Provisional Programme</i></p> <p><i>EHTF6/4 - Provisional list of participants</i></p> <p><i>EHTF6/5- Report of the Fifth meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force (24-25 November 2016)</i></p> <p><i>EHTF6/12 Report of the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board to the 66th WHO Regional Committee for Europe and 22nd session of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy</i></p> <p><i>EHTF6/13 Declaration of the Eighth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”,</i></p>

Tuesday, 29 November 2016	
	<i>Batumi, Georgia, 8-10 June 2016</i>
15:15 – 16:00	<p>Presenting the outcome documents of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health</p> <p>The Secretariat will introduce the draft outcome documents for the Sixth Ministerial Conference, highlighting the drafting process to-date and main contents.</p> <p>The initial part of the negotiation of the outcomes documents of the Sixth Ministerial Declaration will take stock of the input from the Youth Coalition and focus on opportunity for Youth involvement in the Sixth Ministerial Conference and implementation of its commitments.</p> <p><u>Relevant documents:</u></p> <p><i>Xx Document Outcome of the Vienna Youth Conference</i> <i>EHTF6/6 Draft Declaration of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health</i> <i>EHTF6/7 Draft Annex I to the Ministerial Declaration – Implementation Plan</i> <i>EHTF6/8 Draft Annex II to the Ministerial Declaration – Institutional Arrangements</i></p>
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee and tea break (Exhibition of Youth Projects – Market of Opportunities)</i>
16:30 – 18:00	Negotiating the outcome documents of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (cntd.)
19:30 – 22:00	<i>Reception hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management</i>

Wednesday, 30 November 2016	
09:30 – 11:00	Negotiating the outcome documents of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (cntd.)
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee and tea break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Negotiating the outcome documents of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (cntd.)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 15:00	Negotiating the outcome documents of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (cntd.)
15:00 – 15:30	<i>Coffee and tea break</i>
15:30 – 17:00	<p>Preparing for the Ministerial Conference</p> <p>The EHTF will discuss the proposed outline of the programme, the communication strategy for the event and the list of forthcoming preparatory meetings and consultations in the run-up to the Conference.</p> <p><u>Relevant documents:</u></p> <p><i>EHTF6/9 Outline of the programme for the Sixth Ministerial Conference</i> <i>EHTF6/10 Secretariat note on the course of preparations for the Ministerial Conference</i> <i>EHTF6/11 WHO Communication plan for the Ministerial Conference</i></p>
17:00 – 17:30	Any other business, summary of decision and closure of the meeting

Annex 3. Short report

Opening of the meeting

1. The first session of the EHTF meeting was held jointly with the closing session of the International Youth Conference, hosted by Austria in Vienna on 27–29 November 2016.
2. The EHTF meeting was attended by delegations representing 37 Member States, as well as CAREC, ECOFORUM, EEA, EEHYC, EU Committee of the Regions, HEAL, REC, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP.
3. Opening interventions focusing on the importance of intersectoral collaboration and highlighting practical initiatives supporting youth engagement in health, environment and sustainable mobility were given in the form of a talk moderated by Christa Kummer, Austrian Broadcasting Corporation by:
 - Andrä Rupprechter, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
 - Sabine Oberhauser, Federal Minister of Health and Women's Affairs
 - Sophie Karmasin, Federal Minister of Families and Youth
 - Jörg Leichtfried, Federal Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology
 - Samo Kobenter, Director General for Sports, Federal Ministry of National Defence and Sport
 - Marco Keiner, Director Environment Division, UNECE
 - Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe

Involving youth representatives in decision-making and implementation of actions related to environment and health

4. The International Youth Conference was hosted by Austria in Vienna on 27–29 November 2016 and was attended by some 70 youth representatives from more than 30 countries. The Youth Conference resulted in the development of the “Vienna Youth Position Paper”, supplemented by a fact-sheet with suggestions on how the involvement of youth representatives in decision-making could be strengthened, and how youth can help to implement environment and health activities. The Youth Conference also made proposals to highlight “Active Youth Involvement, Meaningful Participation and Education” in the Declaration that will be adopted at the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health.
5. Interventions highlighting the importance of engaging Youth representatives in decisions and implementation activities related to environment and health were made by:
 - Dovile Adamonyte, European Environment and Health Youth Coalition
 - David Neuber, Austrian National Youth Council

Reporting and informing

6. The Chair welcomed participants and thanked Austria for hosting the meeting in Vienna and for organizing the International Youth Conference.
7. Zsuzsanna Jakab welcomed participants on behalf of WHO. In her opening remarks, she thanked Austria for its hospitality and historical leadership in the European Environment and Health Process. She recalled the main messages from the Haifa High Level Mid-Term Review, highlighting how these have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the draft outcome documents for the Ostrava conference. She also thanked the Czech Republic for hosting the upcoming Ministerial Conference.

8. The EHTF:
 - a. Adopted the proposed programme of work;
 - b. Adopted the report of its Fifth meeting, held in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 24–25 November 2016;
 - c. Elected Robert Thaler as its new Chair, and thanked Dragan Gjorgiev for his very effective chairmanship of the EHTF;
 - d. Decided to launch a call for expressions of interest to take up the role of Co-Chair of the EHTF representing the health sector, open to all Member States. Expressions of interest should be submitted to the Secretariat by Friday, 16 December 2016.
9. The EHTF was informed about the main outcomes of discussions held at:
 - The sixty-sixth WHO Regional Committee for Europe (Copenhagen, Denmark, 12–15 September 2016), by Zsuzsanna Jakab;
 - The Eighth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016), by Marco Keiner;
 - The second United Nations Environment Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya, 23–27 May 2016), by Wondwosen Asnake;
 - The International Youth Conference (Vienna, Austria, 27–29 November 2017), by Natalia Ciobanu.
 - The twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Marrakech, Morocco, 7–18 November 2016), by Marina Maiero, WHO Headquarters

Presenting the draft outcome documents of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

10. Srdan Matic introduced the draft outcome documents for the Sixth Ministerial Conference, highlighting the consultation process through which they were developed and their main contents.

Discussion on the draft Ministerial Declaration

11. EHTF members expressed appreciation for the documents that had been provided, as well as for the inclusive consultation process. They also appreciated the links to the Sustainable Development Goals and Health 2020, as important elements providing added value, along with the interlinkages between health and environment. They reiterated the need for the declaration to be short, linking to but avoiding repetitions and duplications of commitments made in other processes, stressing more the equity, social inclusion and resilience (physical and social) dimensions and the need to protect vulnerable groups, placing emphasis on the most important commitments, as well as on the “unfinished business” resulting from the implementation of the Parma Ministerial Declaration.
12. Although some EHTF members expressed a preference for the declaration to focus on a more limited number of priorities, it was recognized that the diversity in the Region makes it difficult to identify a restricted number of priorities of universal relevance. The proposal to allow Member States flexibility in the choice of actions addressing major environment and health threats to better reflect national priorities, notably through the development of a “national portfolio of actions” based on the actions in the implementation plan, could address this point. However, a more explicit text should be developed in the declaration to this effect.
13. The EHTF achieved consensus on:
 - a. Keeping the implementation plan as an annex to the Declaration, to serve

as a guidance document with a proposed menu of actions from which Member States could compose their own national portfolio of actions. The substantive commitments of the implementation plan should be incorporated into the Declaration to establish a clear link between the two documents;

- b. Moving the list of relevant instruments, conventions and resolutions to an appendix, except those that were established directly by the European Environment and Health Process (EHP), namely the Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP).
14. The EHTF entrusted the Ad-Hoc Working Group (AWG) and Secretariat with developing a revised draft of the declaration taking into account the discussions and suggestions provided by the EHTF members.

Discussion on the future EHP institutional framework

15. Srđan Matic introduced the document on future governance of the EHP, explaining that it was felt that there was a need to achieve consensus on the main principles for an effective and efficient governance of the Process, and clarity about the substantive objectives of the declaration before drafting the details of the future governance of the process. These should be functional in order to support the implementation of the commitments to be undertaken in Ostrava.
16. The EHTF achieved consensus on:
- a. Basing the institutional framework on one single body, representing all 53 Member States and stakeholders, and discontinuing the EHMB.
 - b. Retaining for this single body the name “Task Force”, as this would also maintain a sense of continuity and a focus on implementation of concrete actions;
 - c. Encouraging representation in the EHTF at the strategic/high level technical level of Member States and stakeholders, from both the environment and health sectors;
 - d. Emphasizing the importance of strong and effective national coordination mechanisms to ensure implementation of the commitments at the national level, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders and youth representatives.
 - e. Establishing a Bureau to support the work of the EHTF, based on a small (e.g. 8 to 10) number of committed Member States elected by the Task Force, and EHTF stakeholders, including NGOs and Youth, working with the Secretariat in supporting implementation of the commitments taken in Ostrava. The Bureau should be fully transparent, building on the positive experience of the AWG. The Bureau should operate in a very lean way, with a minimum number of meetings.
 - f. Strengthening the links between the EHP and the WHO and UNECE governing bodies, e.g. through yearly sessions/side events at the WHO RC and UNECE CEP, and inclusion of EHTF members and representatives of other sectors in national delegations participating in the WHO RC and UNECE governing bodies;
 - g. Promoting the engagement of Ministers in the EHP through their participation in the meetings of the Governing Bodies and in high-level segments of meetings of the EHTF, to be convened flexibly;
 - h. Supporting the establishment of a joint WHO/UNECE Secretariat,

working in close partnership with UNEP and other actors, including the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. This proposal would need to be brought to the attention of and endorsed by the UNECE CEP in January 2017 and by the UNECE Executive Committee, depending on the availability of additional extra-budgetary resources made available in advance by the Member States;

- i. Fully capitalizing on the strong UN regional coordination mechanism for SDG monitoring and reporting, led by the UNECE. The EHP should be integrated in the issue-based coalition on health.
17. The EHTF entrusted the AWG and Secretariat with developing a draft of the proposed institutional arrangements taking into account the discussions and above-mentioned suggestions provided by the EHTF members.

Discussion on the implementation plan

18. Srđan Matic introduced the implementation plan, summarizing the broad process that, through thematic consultations or statutory meetings of relevant policy instruments, led to the identification of the specific actions proposed to address the different priority areas.
19. The EHTF held a general discussion on the contents and structure of the implementation plan. It achieved consensus on:
- a. Using the implementation plan as an annex to the Declaration, providing guidance on actions that could be used by the Member States in the development of their “national portfolios of actions”
 - b. Moving the text of political relevance, notably in relation to the added value of the Process, the development of national portfolio of actions and the use of the SDG monitoring system to the declaration;
 - c. Making the implementation plan leaner and more focused, taking out unnecessary details, such as references to the SDGs targets;
 - d. Setting general targets, but leaving to the Member States their quantitative specifications.
20. The EHTF entrusted the AWG and Secretariat with developing a revised draft of the Declaration taking into account the discussions and suggestions provided by the EHTF members.

Preparing for the Ministerial Conference

21. A representative of the Czech Republic informed the EHTF of the positive developments of the conference preparation, and of the appointment of a new Minister of Health, who remains fully committed to the Conference.
22. Srđan Matic informed on progress in the preparation of the host agreement between the Czech Republic and the WHO. He introduced the conference venue, with the support of a short video. He informed of on-going discussions with UNEP to hold a regional consultation with Ministers of Environment in preparation for UNEA3, back to back with the Ministerial Conference. He announced that the Ostrava Conference will be co-sponsored also by UNECE and UNEP.
23. The EHTF reviewed the list of forthcoming preparatory meetings and consultations in the run-up to the Conference. These include:
- a. The meeting of the UNECE CEP in January 2017;
 - b. A consultation of Central Asian Member States organised by CAREC in February 2017 in Almaty;
 - c. An additional meeting of the EHTF between end of March and early April;

d. A meeting of the AWG in Ostrava in late April;

In addition, the AWG will meet virtually, as needed, to advance the preparation of the Conference.

Any other business, summary of decisions and closure of the meeting

24. Srdan Matic informed that a revised version of the Declaration and implementation plan will be made available before the end-of-the-year break. The proposal for the new institutional framework will be made available after the UNECE CEP meeting.
25. Brigit Staatsen announced the stakeholder consultation meeting which will take place in Utrecht on 13-14 December, hosted by the Netherlands, and invited EHTF members to participate in the consultation.
26. The EHTF was informed that Lis Keiding, Specialized Medical Officer from the Danish Health Authority will retire at the end of 2016, and will be succeeded by Pernille Thygesen as the incoming Focal Person from Denmark representing the health sector. The EHTF expressed its gratitude to Lis Keiding for her very many contributions and support to the Process and welcomed her successor.
27. The Chair of the EHTF thanked participants for their active contributions and the Secretariat for the preparation of the meeting.
28. The EHTF thanked the Austrian Government for its excellent hospitality and Dragan Gjorgiev and Robert Thaler for their very effective chairing of the meeting.

Annex 4. List of participants

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