



**EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH PROCESS**



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EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROCESS NEWSLETTER

October–December 2022

1. EDITORIAL
2. TOP STORIES
3. COUNTRY ACTIVITIES
4. RECENT EVENTS
5. LATEST PUBLICATIONS
6. EHP CORNER
7. NEWS FROM EHP STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS
8. UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES



October–December 2022

1. EDITORIAL

Welcome to the winter issue of the [European Environment and Health Process](#) (EHP) newsletter.

Here you can find updates on developments related to the implementation of the [Ostrava Declaration](#), and to the preparations for the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (7MC), which will take place on 5–7 July 2023 in Budapest, Hungary. Find out about activities in countries, take-away lessons from COVID-19 management and new publications by reading further.

We hope that the items included in this newsletter are of interest to you.

Best regards,
EHP Secretariat



2. TOP STORIES

Highlights from the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health

Around 300 participants from 45 countries of the pan-European Region, including more than 20 ministers, state secretaries and ambassadors, attended the [sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health](#)

(MOP6), which took place on 16–18 November 2022 in Geneva. The high-level segment of MOP6 focused on the central role of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in addressing two converging crises – the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. It provided an opportunity for countries to discuss the policy actions and WASH interventions that were pursued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the lessons learned and their relevance for preparing for



possible future pandemics. Countries also exchanged experience on the challenges posed by climate change, as well as policies and practical responses that can be taken to strengthen climate resilience in the water, sanitation and health sectors. The [conclusions](#) of the high-level session feature key messages and actions needed to strengthen WASH resilience to climate change and future pandemics. The session highlighted the role of the Protocol as a powerful legally binding instrument that supports such actions at the national level. Hungary, the new Chair of the Meeting of the Parties, on behalf of the 27 Parties to the Protocol, submitted the session conclusions for consideration by the United Nations 2023 Water Conference.

MOP6 also reviewed [achievements and progress in the implementation of the Protocol](#) and adopted a new ambitious [programme of work for 2023–2025](#), addressing key regional challenges and priorities.

The [Protocol on Water and Health](#), jointly supported by WHO/Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), is the prime European policy platform aimed at attaining safe drinking-water and adequate sanitation for everyone.

For more information about countries' progress towards accession to the Protocol, key publications and other highlights and decisions, please read [here](#). For WHO European Centre

for Environment and Health (ECEH) resources launched at MOP6, please see the "[Publications](#)" section.



October–December 2022



Photo: Participants of MOP6

Coinciding with the close of MOP6, 19 November was **World Toilet Day**. This year, the focus was on the impact of the sanitation crisis on groundwater. Groundwater is the world's most abundant source of freshwater, and yet it is threatened by climate change, as well as

inadequate sanitation systems, which spread human faecal waste into rivers, lakes and soil, and pollute underground water resources. Safely managed sanitation is needed to protect groundwater from human waste pollution.

Addressing technical gaps and fostering leadership on environment and health: the Bonn School on Environment and Health

Organized by WHO ECEH, the third edition of the **Bonn School on Environment and Health** took place virtually, focusing on creating transformative public health leadership in the WHO European Region. The Bonn School addressed technical gaps and raised awareness on environment and health challenges in countries, while attempting to build capacity at the national and local levels to strive for safer and healthier communities.

The Bonn School gathered more than 50 participants from over 20 countries and areas in the European Region. Over four weeks,

participants were immersed in state-of-the-art science and knowledge in the areas of contaminated sites and health impact assessment. The Bonn School has also established a cross-sectoral collaboration and exchange network to build a community of practice for environment and health professionals across the Region.

The Bonn School on Environment and Health is part of the commitment to achieve better health and well-being for all, as outlined in WHO's [European Programme of Work, 2020–2025](#).



October–December 2022

Accelerating the use of human biomonitoring in chemical risk assessment

On 12–13 October 2022, WHO ECEH held a meeting of Member States on **health-related priorities in chemical safety, with a focus on human biomonitoring (HBM) and poison centres**. The overall objective of the meeting, held in Bonn, was to identify key steps and the support needed to accelerate the use of HBM in chemical risk assessment, and to strengthen the health sector institutional structure – such as poison centres – to address existing and upcoming challenges in countries in the Region. The meeting was attended by a total of 83

participants, with 33 in-person and 50 virtual attendees from the health and environment sector – including national research centres – representing 37 countries of the European Region. Experts from Canada, Japan and the United States of America participated in the meeting as WHO temporary advisors. Also, two draft policy briefs on HBM and poison centres were discussed as a contribution to 7MC and the [5th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management](#).



3. COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

Air quality and health

- On 14–15 December 2022, a Science–Policy Dialogue on Air Quality and Health was carried out in Bishkek under the coordination of WHO Country Office in **Kyrgyzstan** and WHO ECEH. Over 30 experts on air pollution and health across all sectors acknowledged that air pollution is an urgent health issue to be addressed to protect the health of citizens and improve the ambient air quality in Kyrgyzstan. WHO experts introduced participants to [WHO global air quality guidelines](#), the Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution and WHO tools, followed by specific presentations on [AirQ+](#), [CLIMAQ-H](#) (previously called CaRBonH), [HEAT](#), [GreenUr](#) and [BAR-HAP](#).

Chemical safety and health

- On 25 November 2022, the international scientific and practical conference, “Health and Environment” was held in **Belarus**, on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Scientific Practical Centre of Hygiene. WHO ECEH presented on global and regional priorities in chemical safety and their realization in Belarus.
- On 25 November 2022, a conference on occupational health, chemical safety and toxicology was hosted by the National Agency for Public Health in the **Republic of Moldova**. Participants discussed recent developments in chemical safety and proposed ways forward towards building a sound chemical management system in the country.
- On 12–13 December 2022, WHO ECEH and the WHO Country Office in Montenegro held the “Multi-country training workshop: initial steps for the establishment of a poison centre” in Podgorica, **Montenegro**. The workshop was designed for participants from countries which had expressed interest in assistance with the establishment of a poison centre – Albania, Armenia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. In total, 27 national and international experts participated in the meeting. The topics that inspired particular interest among participants were the role, responsibilities and operation of poison centres; early warning systems; antidotes availability; collection and provision of information; and databases.

Climate change and health

- On 10 October 2022, **Turkmenistan** hosted a national conference dedicated to the Day of the Healthcare and Medical Industry

Workers, organized by the national Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, with input from WHO ECEH. New approaches presented



October–December 2022

during the conference, entitled “Healthcare, Education and Sports in the Renaissance of the New Era of a Powerful State”, were aimed at intensifying international cooperation in

the field of health care and combining efforts in developing consolidated, coordinated responses to the global challenges of our time, such as climate change and health.

Environment and health policies and inequality

- On 10 October 2022, **Belgium** hosted a meeting entitled “Public health review: Belgium – Discussion on policy recommendations and way forward”. The event – organized by the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment and WHO/Europe – focused on the review of noncommunicable disease

challenges in Belgium, and how the national health system tackles these challenges. As a part of the review, air pollution and a range of further environmental risks were covered, and focus was placed on equity and distributional issues. The final report is forthcoming.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- On 1–2 December 2022, the Ministry of Health and Care Services of **Norway** hosted the 9th meeting of the Nordic-Baltic Network for Water and Health, with the input of WHO ECEH. The meeting addressed aspects related to drinking-water safety, the harmonization of national legislation with the [revised European Union \(EU\) drinking-water directive](#), and the [public health application of wastewater surveillance](#) in the context of managing COVID-19 and its potential use for future pandemics. Over 30 participants from Estonia, the Faroe Islands (Denmark), Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden attended the meeting.
- On 13 December 2022, WHO ECEH participated in a stakeholder meeting to disseminate key results of the [UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water](#) (GLAAS) country survey in **Uzbekistan** (see “Publications” section). Representatives from the health, water resources, economy and foreign trade sectors;

water service providers; the WHO Country Office in Uzbekistan; and WHO headquarters attended the meeting and discussed the follow-up activities on priority WASH issues that were identified by the GLAAS survey.

- On 15 December 2022, WHO ECEH participated virtually in the national workshop on water, sanitation and hygiene in schools in **Montenegro** to share WHO and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) recommendations and the evidence from the Region on gaps in WASH implementation and actions needed to inform the country’s efforts in developing a national action plan for WASH improvement. Participants included representatives from the Institute for Public Health; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Finance; Secretariat-General of the Government of Montenegro; nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and primary and secondary schools.



4. RECENT EVENTS

4 October 2022

WHO ECEH and the Union for the Mediterranean jointly organized a webinar on “[Protecting environments and health by building urban resilience](#)”. This webinar, attended by 132 participants, aimed to reflect on the different dimensions of local preparedness and resilience, and to discuss the experiences of national and local governments, and potential actions that they can take to establish and support preparedness and resilience. The webinar opened by sharing key messages from the WHO project “[Protecting environments and health by shaping urban resilience](#)”.

11 October 2022

A joint meeting of the projects **Estimating the Morbidity from Air Pollution and its Economic Costs** ([EMAPEC](#)) and **Health Risks of Air Pollution in Europe** ([HRAPIE-2](#)) was held online. Experts finalized the criteria for selecting concentration-response functions derived from systematic reviews to conduct impact assessments.

17–19 October 2022

The **Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme** ([THE PEP](#)) held its [20th session](#) in Geneva, in a hybrid format. The meeting provided an opportunity for countries to discuss the commitments made at the Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, in particular to establish: a comprehensive pan-European strategy on transport, health and the environment to be developed in 2023; THE PEP communication strategy to be adopted in 2023; and THE PEP survey to monitor the implementation of the Vienna Declaration (the first survey will be conducted in 2023).

Countries also exchanged experience on the work of the six THE PEP Partnerships and agreed on the revised workplan for 2021–2025.

In addition, a seminar on “Transport, health and environment: including a gender perspective” took place in the margins of the session.



October–December 2022

25–27 October 2022

Held in Tirana, Albania – the European Youth Capital 2022 – the first-ever WHO/Europe [Youth4Health forum](#) was all about youth health and well-being, and their engagement in decision-making. Youth4Health is WHO/Europe's [youth initiative](#).

Participants agreed on a blueprint for follow-up actions to: 1) work together to promote and create healthy and sustainable environments that directly address current health and climate issues and risks; 2) increase youth engagement in health decision-making; and 3) improve youth health and well-being. For more on youth commitments, please see the [Youth4Health statement](#) adopted at the forum.



6–20 November 2022

Representatives and negotiators from all over the world gathered in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, at the 2022 [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) (COP27) to build on prior agreements to urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build resilience and adapt – despite the challenges – to the inevitable impacts of climate change. Creating a specific fund for loss and damage marked an important point of progress, with the issue added to the official agenda for the first time at COP27.

During COP27, WHO led the United Nations high-level side event on the [Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health](#) and the [Global Youth Forum on Health and Climate Change](#). WHO helped facilitate the negotiations by supporting the participation of national health representatives in country delegations and strengthening joint advocacy with NGO, United Nations and academic partners on key cross-cutting health and climate issues.

WHO in close collaboration with the health community also prepared [policy briefs](#), submissions and statements to address key health-relevant issues under negotiation at COP27 and provide support to negotiators on how to include health in different negotiating streams. WHO also hosted the Health Pavilion at COP27. Over 50 events were organized in the Health Pavilion over the span of two weeks, showcasing the health arguments for ambitious climate action across many different sectors and topics to ensure health and equity are placed at the centre of the debate. The statement made by WHO Regional Director for Europe, Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, urging action is available [here](#).



October–December 2022

9–12 November 2022

The 2022 edition of the [European Public Health Conference](#) – Europe’s largest gathering of public health associations, institutes and professionals – convened in Berlin, culminating in calls for investments in stronger health systems in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking part in the conference, WHO/Europe’s delegation of experts urged the public health community in the region to adopt a “dual-track” approach to stronger health systems in countries, focusing on both the provision of high-quality services and emergency preparedness and response.

18–24 November 2022

The slogan of this year’s [World Antimicrobial Awareness Week](#) was “Antimicrobials: Handle with Care”. It highlighted the fact that antimicrobial medicines, such as antibiotics, are a precious resource and should be used prudently. This year’s theme of “Preventing antimicrobial resistance together” calls for cross-sectoral collaboration to preserve the efficacy of these important medicines. To curb antimicrobial resistance (AMR) effectively, all sectors must use antimicrobials prudently and adopt other preventive measures. One way to reduce the need for antimicrobials and minimize the emergence of AMR is to ensure access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, and to ensure proper waste and sanitation management.

22–24 November 2022

The [WHO European Healthy Cities Network](#) annual [business meeting and technical conference](#) aimed to present the opportunity to learn from the work of healthy cities across the European Region and beyond. It attracted politicians and key decision-makers from cities, as well as technical experts. The 2022 conference theme was “Healthy cities leading by example: one planet, one people, one health”.

1 December 2022

The participants of the 4th [meeting](#) of **THE PEP Ad hoc Working Group on Strategy and Possible Legal Instruments** (held virtually) continued discussion on the draft outline of the Strategy on Transport, Health and Environment and provided input for its further advancement. The Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) will support the development of the Strategy that is expected to be adopted in 2024.



October–December 2022

1–2 December 2022

WHO/Europe, through WHO ECEH and the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD Office), organized an **expert meeting** in Bonn, as a first step towards **better alignment of noncommunicable disease (NCD) prevention policies with climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies**. The purpose of this meeting was to identify, map and discuss the linkages between policy actions designed to prevent NCDs and those addressing climate change. The meeting also served to guide future areas of work for WHO/Europe to support countries to progress towards common objectives and targets for NCD prevention and climate change and health.

5–7 December 2022

The [Regions for Health Network](#) (RHN) held its 27th annual [meeting](#) called, “Health and well-being in times of crisis: building resilience and learning from practice”. The meeting was hosted by one of the RHN’s oldest members, the Flanders region in Belgium. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss local and regional health governance for better health and well-being and to agree on a joint roadmap for health and well-being in WHO/Europe’s regions, including priority themes and activities for 2023–2026. WHO ECEH contributed to the event by providing participants with state-of-the-art evidence on the nature and magnitude of existing and emerging climate change related health risks.

7–19 December 2022

Governments from around the world came together at the [United Nations Biodiversity Conference](#) (COP 15) in Montreal, Canada, to agree on a new set of goals to guide global action through 2030 to halt and reverse nature loss. COP 15 resulted in the adoption of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), which aims to address biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems and protect indigenous peoples’ rights. Also, during the conference, the Global Biodiversity Fund was established, which will complement existing support and scale up financing to ensure the timely implementation of the [post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#).

19–21 December 2022

The 11th meeting of the Working Group of the UNECE Focal Points of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) took place in Geneva, Switzerland. WHO supported the further development of the draft UNECE guidance document on “Assessing health impacts under the SEA Protocol”. The draft guidance will be presented in a further revision at the next Working Group meeting, to be endorsed in December 2023 by the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on SEA.



5. LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Economics of the health implications of waste management in the context of a circular economy



This [report](#) analyses assessment of the economic benefits of the health outcomes of better waste management, and discusses approaches to assessing health impacts and their economic consequences in decision-making for a zero pollution future based on the principles of a circular economy and sustainable waste management. Transformation to more sustainable waste management with low health risks entails substantial economic costs: in remediation of historic waste deposit sites, investment in purchasing and maintaining modern technologies for waste burning, and promoting job switching to avoid lost livelihoods. Economic assessment methods have evolved and include selected topics in the social dimension of sustainability, such as equity. This trend in economic assessment has substantially facilitated the evaluation of health and

well-being in the context of the circular economy and waste management in both the short and long term.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: Europe's compass in a multipolar world

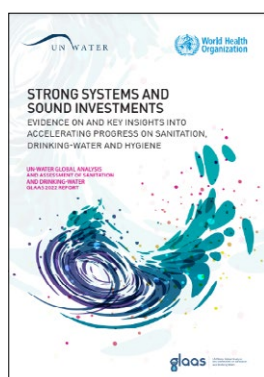


This is the 4th edition of the Europe Sustainable Development [report](#), including the SDG Index and Dashboards, which track progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the EU, its Member States and partner countries.

The report includes key recommendations and first-hand contributions from thought leaders and scientists to strengthen the EU's leadership at home and internationally in the run-up to major international summits in July and September 2023.

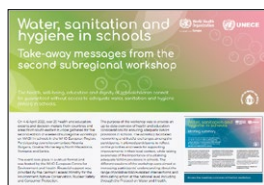


Evidence on and key insights into accelerating progress on sanitation, drinking-water and hygiene



The GLAAS 2022 [report](#) compiles new data on drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) from 121 countries and territories and 23 external support agencies. It serves as a global reference to inform commitments, priority-setting and actions during the second half of the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also highlights opportunities to accelerate progress in key WASH areas that positively affect the quality and sustainability of WASH services and delivery, improve preparedness for pandemics and increase resilience to climate change.

Water, sanitation and hygiene in schools – Take-away messages from the second subregional workshop



The [report](#) synthesizes key findings and country case studies gained from a subregional workshop for countries of south-eastern Europe addressing health and education considerations for ensuring adequate WASH provisions in schools. The workshop facilitated networking and fruitful exchanges among the participants, including on the priorities and needs for supporting improvements in their local context, while raising awareness of the importance of sustaining adequate WASH provisions in schools.

Delivering safe sanitation for all: areas for action to improve the situation in the pan-European region

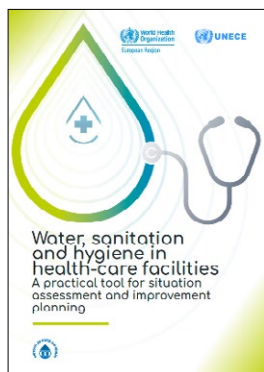


This [publication](#) aims to support the implementation of the provisions on sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health, as well as national and international goals and targets on sanitation. The publication provides an overview of the situation of sanitation and wastewater management in the region, highlights current and emerging issues in ensuring access to safe and sustainable sanitation services and proposes key actions to strengthen sanitation governance.



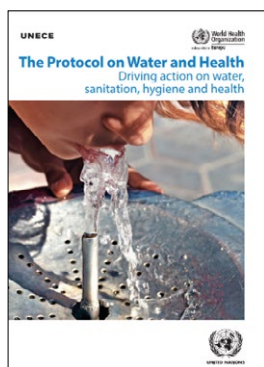
October–December 2022

Water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities: a practical tool for situation assessment and improvement planning



This [publication](#) is a practical tool to support national and subnational health authorities that conduct systematic assessments of WASH in health-care facilities, including waste management and environmental cleaning. It features a comprehensive checklist to facilitate the identification of achievements as well as gaps and needs for improvement.

The Protocol on Water and Health: driving action on water, sanitation, hygiene and health



This [publication](#) provides an introduction to the UNECE–WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health, presenting its core provisions, highlighting the benefits of being a Party to the Protocol and providing an insight into the Protocol's technical areas of work on water, sanitation, hygiene and health. It also includes frequently asked questions for countries considering accession to the Protocol.

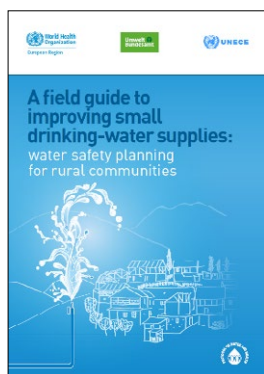
Making water and sanitation affordable for all: policy options and good practices



This [publication](#) aims to support the efforts of countries in the progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking-water and sanitation, in particular to raise the understanding of policy-makers on how affordability concerns can be addressed, and promote further action on ensuring affordable water and sanitation services.

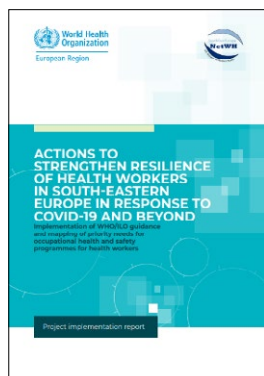


A field guide to improving small drinking-water supplies: water safety planning for rural communities



The WHO guidelines for drinking-water quality recommend the water safety plan (WSP) approach as the most effective way of ensuring continuous provision of safe drinking-water. The WSP approach emphasizes the importance of preventing waterborne disease, and supports communities in dealing with the everyday challenges of maintaining a reliable and safe water supply. This second, updated edition of the [WSP field guide](#) provides a step-by-step introduction to the WSP approach and includes a range of ready-to-use templates to assist those involved in rural water supply with developing and implementing their own WSPs.

Actions to strengthen resilience of health workers in south-eastern Europe



This [publication](#) provides an overview of the training and communication activities undertaken in the project implementing countries.

The “Actions to strengthen resilience of health workers in south-eastern Europe in response to COVID-19 and beyond: implementation of WHO/International Labour Organization guidance and mapping of priority needs for occupational health and safety programmes for health workers” [project](#) was implemented by the South-East European Network on Workers’ Health.

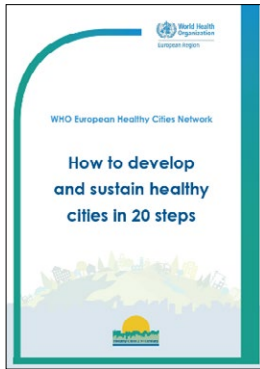
Preventing injuries and violence



This brief advocacy [document](#) highlights the burden, risks and prevention of injuries and violence, which took the lives of 4.4 million people in 2019 and constitute 8% of all deaths globally. Causes of injury-related death include road traffic accidents, drowning, falls, burns, poisoning and violence against oneself or others. This document is aimed at public health professionals; injury prevention researchers, practitioners and advocates; and donors. It draws attention to specific strategies based on sound scientific evidence that are effective and cost-effective at preventing injuries and violence. It is critical that these strategies are more widely implemented in order to avoid preventable deaths.



Developing and sustaining healthy cities in 20 steps



This [guide](#) is for coordinators and secretariats of cities in the WHO European Healthy Cities Network and national healthy cities networks in the Network of European National Healthy Cities Networks supported by the WHO Regional Office for Europe. It is also for those who are considering adopting the Healthy Cities model. It can be used as a guide or a reference for those in the process of introducing the Healthy Cities model or reviewing and expanding an existing network.

Antimicrobial resistance and use surveillance system



The WHO Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) was launched in 2015 to foster AMR surveillance and inform strategies to contain AMR.

The fifth GLASS [report](#), produced in collaboration with Member States, summarizes 2020 data on AMR rates in common bacteria from countries, territories and areas. The report brings new features, including analyses of population testing coverage and AMR trends. For the first time, the report presents 2020 data on antimicrobial consumption at the national level.

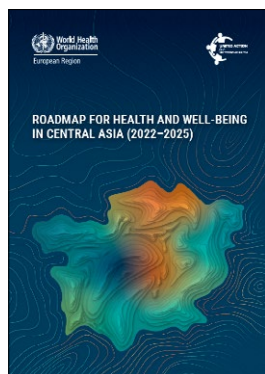
Surveillance of antimicrobial resistance in Europe, 2021 data: executive summary



The results presented in this executive [summary](#) are based on AMR data from invasive isolates reported to the Central Asian and European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance (CAESAR) network and the European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (EARS-Net) in 2022 (data referring to 2021).

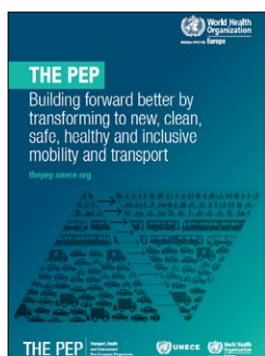


Roadmap for health and well-being in central Asia



The [Roadmap](#) builds on the individual health goals and priorities of central Asia countries (CACs) through the lens of the European Programme of Work 2020–2025. The Roadmap aligns CACs' efforts and fosters cooperation with partners to facilitate the pursuit of its political, investment and technical objectives. The Roadmap identifies 11 high-impact action areas and 32 reform initiatives following an extensive consultative process with WHO/Europe and CACs' ministries of health, national health authorities and development partners.

Building forward better by transforming to new, clean, safe, healthy and inclusive mobility and transport



In a region that is home to 17% of the world population, the 56 Member States of the UNECE and WHO European region are cooperating and working within the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) in synergy with intergovernmental organizations, as well as with national and local authorities and all relevant stakeholders. THE PEP is the only international programme designed to integrate environmental and health aspects into transport, mobility and urban planning policies. Read more about THE PEP, its objectives, areas of work, recent activities, tools and publications in a new [brochure](#), available in four languages (English, French, German and Russian).

Reducing noncommunicable diseases: a signature roadmap for the WHO European Region



At the centre of the [Roadmap](#) are six signature initiatives – covering cardiovascular diseases (hypertension and salt intake), childhood obesity, digital marketing, greener and healthier cities, data and digital health – designed to close the gaps between knowledge and implementation and to foster innovation. These signature initiatives comprise actions to increase engagement and advocate for scaled-up policy implementation, as well as to accelerate progress by innovating, advancing knowledge and developing new tools.



October–December 2022

The 2022 Europe report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change

This is the first [report](#) of the Lancet Countdown Europe, to which WHO ECEH contributed. The report mirrors that of the [global Lancet Countdown report](#), tracking progress on health and climate change in five areas: climate change impacts, exposures and vulnerabilities; adaptation, planning and resilience for health;

mitigation actions and health co-benefits; economics and finance; and politics and governance. It shows region-specific indicators that provide information to guide health and climate policy decision-making and contribute data to the European Climate and Health Observatory.

Update of the WHO global air quality guidelines: systematic reviews – an introduction

WHO ECEH produced this introductory [paper](#) to the special issue of Environment International dedicated to the evidence informing the global air quality guidelines. The article has two main objectives: (1) to provide the context

to this Special Issue, related to policy, overall exposure to air pollution, and burden of disease attributable to air pollution; and (2) to describe the WHO guideline development process, with special emphasis on the systematic reviews.

1 in 3 use antibiotics without prescription, WHO/Europe's study shows

Only two-thirds of people in 14 countries in the WHO European Region who took part in a recent [survey](#), were able to say their last course of antibiotics was obtained with a medical prescription. One in three people either used leftover antibiotics from a previous prescription or obtained them without a prescription over the counter from a pharmacy or elsewhere.

This is at least three times more than what was reported among EU/European Economic Area (EEA) countries, in their most recent survey of citizens by the European Commission (EC) (please see "[News from EHP stakeholders and partners](#)").



6. EHP CORNER

5–7 October 2022

WHO ECEH outlined the collective progress of Member States in implementing the EHP at the **Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference** in Cyprus, which focussed on two main themes: “Greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards sustainable infrastructure”, and “Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism”. In connection to the latter, WHO ECEH, under the auspices of THE PEP, co-organized, together with UNECE, a side event on “**Sustainable mobility for sustainable tourism**”. This side event aimed at sharing good practices about how national governments – in cooperation with local and regional administrations and transport providers – can integrate sustainable mobility in tourism and implement effective strategies and actions.

11–12 October 2022

WHO ECEH organized the **10th meeting of the Working Group on Health in Climate Change** (HIC) in a virtual format. The aim of the meeting was to review recent developments in climate change and health and prepare for 7MC. In addition to key updates on the latest evidence and ongoing initiatives, the participants discussed strategic directions in addressing and promoting the health case for climate change in the European Region, and the formulation of regional priorities for the health sector in preparation of the outcomes of 7MC. The HIC Working Group stressed the need to move from awareness of environment and health issues to action to resolve them, and supported the proposal to present an updated version of the document **Zero regrets: scaling up action on climate change mitigation and adaptation for health in the WHO European Region** at 7MC, with revised scientific evidence and priorities. The meeting was attended by 78 participants,

including delegates from 29 Member States, and representatives of the EC, United Nations agencies, the Lancet Countdown on Climate Change and Health, NGOs and academia.

14 October 2022



WHO ECEH, under the auspices of the EHP, held the **4th of the series of high-level Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health**.

Participants at this event discussed opportunities and emerging approaches to designing and implementing policies and measures that promote effective risk communication. The bases of the discussion were the latest trends, theories and concepts for efficient communication between scientists, policy-makers and other stakeholders, as well as recent evidence from risk communication for environment and health practices.

The discussion utilized the findings of the WHO report, “**Effective risk communication for environment and health**”, realized within the framework of the EU Health Environment Research Agenda for Europe project.

8 November 2022

WHO ECEH and the WHO European Healthy Cities Network Working Group on Environment and Health organized the **5th meeting of the Working Group on Collaboration of Local and Subnational Authorities** (CoLSA), a body established by the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) to advance the implementation of the Ostrava Declaration.



October–December 2022

CoLSA working group members and partners from international networks discussed the preparatory steps towards 7MC, with a focus on

how to contribute to the conference by bringing the perspective of local-level implementation and proposing possible outcomes.

In focus: highlights from the 12th meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force

Following up on the 10th meeting of the EHTF Bureau (27 October 2022), the 12th meeting of the EHTF, held on 23–24 November 2022 in Bonn and virtually, provided an opportunity for countries to discuss and accelerate different aspects related to the ministerial conference preparatory process. In particular, the discussion focused on the following main areas:

- The EHTF discussed and provided input to the draft outcome document for 7MC, the Ministerial Declaration, as well as to the provisional conference programme. Also, EHTF members agreed with the concept for the new proposed operational EHTF mechanism, the EHP Partnerships, to support the implementation of its commitments at national and international levels by fostering collaboration and exchange of knowledge among partners interested in working together to address specific environment and health challenges.
- The 7MC programme will be complemented by side events and an exhibition, providing Member States and stakeholders with opportunities to present their achievements and work, strengthen partnerships, showcase initiatives and explore, in depth, issues and themes that are relevant to the conference. The call for side events and booths for the exhibition will be sent to the EHTF in early 2023.
- The EHTF elected one member of the Bureau from the environment sector, and the new Chair and co-Chair. Congratulations to the representatives from Georgia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom! Many thanks to Hungary and Serbia for the leadership and unwavering support they provided to the EHP! The list of the current EHTF Bureau members is available [here](#).

The meeting was attended by 85 delegates from 39 Member States and 10 stakeholders, with almost half of them attending in person.

Stay tuned for further meeting developments!



Photo: Participants of the 12th EHTF meeting



October–December 2022

7. NEWS FROM EHP STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

European Environment Agency report – Climate change as a threat to health and well-being in Europe: focus on heat and infectious diseases

The [report](#) draws on the knowledge collated and developed for the European Climate and Health Observatory under its 2021–2022 work plan, which has an explicit focus on high temperatures and climate-sensitive infectious diseases. The knowledge includes the set of

indicators developed by the Lancet Countdown Europe and the Copernicus Climate Change Service, case studies undertaken in various European countries, and national policy analyses.

World Meteorological Organization report: State of the climate in Europe 2021

This [report](#) provides the status of key climate indicators using the World Meteorological Organization and partner organizations' operational monitoring systems and the latest data and information on impacts, risks and policy from United Nations agencies, including

WHO ECEH, and the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service, and focuses on 2021. It provides information on rising temperatures, land and marine heatwaves, extreme weather, changing precipitation patterns and retreating ice and snow.

EC addresses AMR through a One Health approach

The growing threat underlines the need to tackle AMR through a One Health approach, which acknowledges the inter-linkages between human health, animal health and the environment. In 2022, [new EU rules](#) came into force to ensure that antimicrobials crucial for human medicine remain effective by prohibiting their use in veterinary medicine.

The EC also published a [review of Member States' One Health National Action Plans against AMR](#). The review found that many Member States would benefit from a stronger One Health approach towards AMR, taking on board the impact of antibiotics on the environment.



EC adopts [Horizon Europe work programme 2023–2024](#)

The EC has adopted the Horizon Europe work programme 2023–2024, with around €13.5 billion to support researchers and innovators in Europe to pursue breakthrough solutions for environmental, energy, digital and geopolitical challenges.

Under the work programme's Destination 2 "Living and working in a health-promoting environment", the following thematic areas are open for proposals:

- Planetary health: understanding the links between environmental degradation and health impacts;
- Evidence-based interventions for promotion of mental and physical health in changing

working environments (post-pandemic workplaces);

- Health impacts of endocrine-disrupting chemicals: bridging science–policy gaps by addressing persistent scientific uncertainties;
- Global coordination of exposome research;
- The role of environmental pollution in noncommunicable diseases: air, noise and light and hazardous waste pollution.

The EC's Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change, which is linked to the Horizon Europe work programme 2023–2024, will have an [info day](#), where it will present the [new areas](#) to be funded by the Mission in 2023.

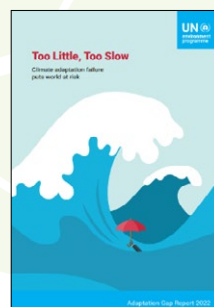
UNEP launched new reports on climate change and nature-based solutions

Greening the Blue is a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) initiative to engage and support the United Nations system in the transition towards greater environmental sustainability in the management of its facilities and operations.

The 2022 edition of the [report](#) highlights the 2021 environmental impacts of 307 000 personnel in 53 reporting entities across headquarters, field offices and operations on the ground.



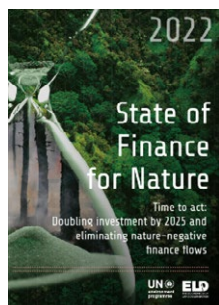
A [report](#) on decent work in nature-based solutions aims to fill knowledge and advocacy gaps on how transitions to a green economy will affect the world of work.



The Adaptation Gap [Report](#) 2022 (Too little, too slow) looks at the benefits of prioritizing actions that both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities adapt, such as nature-based solutions.



October–December 2022



The [report](#) on the state of finance for nature aims to highlight progress on key targets to which finance flows are aligned with global targets and the investment needed to limit global warming and halt biodiversity loss.



The Emissions Gap [Report](#) 2022 (The closing window) provides an overview of the difference between where greenhouse emissions are predicted to be in 2030 and where they should be to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

New online course: Digital4Sustainability

The United Nations System Staff College and the UNEP launched an online course entitled Digital4Sustainability during COP27. The course explores the transformational role

that digital technologies and innovations can play in advancing environmental and social sustainability while also considering potential risks. The enrolment page for the course is [here](#).



October–December 2022

8. UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Fifth Bonn Dialogue on Environment and Health: “Preventing and reducing the negative impacts of hazardous chemicals on health and the environment” (virtual, 21 February 2023). Register for the event [here](#).

11th meeting of the EHTF Bureau (Budapest, 28 February–1 March 2023)

[UN 2023 Water Conference](#) (New York, 22–24 March 2023)

13th meeting of the EHTF (Brussels, 20–21 April 2023)

29th meeting of the Bureau of the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 20–21 April 2023)

Central Asia Climate Change Conference (Dushanbe, 16–17 May 2023)

Launch event for the WHO report on “Assessing the value of urban green and blue spaces for health and well-being” (virtual, 22 May 2023). For more, click here: [International Day for Biological Diversity](#).

7th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Budapest, 5–7 July 2023). Against the challenge posed to health by the triple environmental crisis related to climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference will commit to accelerating the transformational changes that are necessary to protect health in the WHO European Region. It will also provide an opportunity to showcase good practices and to find effective ways of moving “policy to action”, increasing resilience and “building forward better”. The political outcome of the Conference is being negotiated by the EHTF, where all the 53 Member States of the Region are represented through their national focal points. Please keep an eye out for more updates on the Conference scope, outcome documents, side events and registration, which we plan to share in the next newsletter issue.

Strategic Roundtable on Climate Change under the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, date to be confirmed)

6th meeting of the CoLSA working group (date to be confirmed)



October–December 2022

Heads-up: call to participate in the assessment of the National Portfolios of Action on Environment and Health

In February 2023, EHTF members will be given an opportunity to participate in a study which will inform a policy report that will be launched at 7MC. The study will use data collected through a desk review of existing National Portfolios of Action on Environment and Health (NPs), a questionnaire and interviews.

The study aims to:

- more comprehensively identify current and future priority areas that were addressed through NPs;
- assess the potential use of and benefits from the process of developing and implementing NPs;
- identify barriers and specific needs that Member States have for technical support while developing NPs;
- assess potential amendments of the NPs' development/implementation process to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of the Ostrava Declaration and potentially forthcoming decisions and commitments;
- understand what mechanisms could be used to promote intersectoral and intergenerational collaboration;
- identify case studies that demonstrate good practices related to the successful implementation of NPs.

In parallel to the questionnaire and interview launch, WHO ECEH organized a webinar as a guide on the study objectives and to answer any possible questions. This event was open to members of the EHTF and anyone working on NPs at the regional, national and local government levels.

Please stay tuned for updates!



October–December 2022

Opportunity to participate in a survey on the environment and health impacts of uncontrolled and poor management of hazardous wastes

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health in Contaminated Sites, operating at the Italian National Institute of Health, is launching an international survey on the environment and health impacts of uncontrolled and poor management of hazardous wastes across the European Region, in collaboration with WHO ECEH.

The aim of the survey is to reveal the extent of illegal and informal waste management, highlighting the known national case studies. Official inventories of uncontrolled and illegal waste dumps are rarely available and very difficult to establish; however, it is important to share information and experiences between health and environment experts, national and local public institutions, representatives of communities and NGOs.

Considering the potential impact on environment and human health, the management of waste is included among the WHO environment and health priorities to achieve the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Of great concern are the activities that are poorly controlled, involve outdated technologies or (worse) involve informal disposal such as open-air burning or the illegal transportation or disposal of waste, including hazardous waste.

The results of this survey will be the basis of a report that will hopefully be presented at the next Ministerial Conference. Please contact Dr Lucia Fazzo (lucia.fazzo@iss.it) to participate and to receive the link to a short online questionnaire.



9. CONTACT US

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