



**EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH PROCESS**



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROCESS NEWSLETTER

April – June 2021

1. EDITORIAL	2
2. COUNTRY ACTIVITIES	2
3. ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND COVID-19	3
4. RECENT EVENTS	4
5. LATEST PUBLICATIONS AND PODCASTS	9
6. EHP CORNER	13
7. NEWS FROM EHP STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS	15
8. UPCOMING EVENTS	16
9. CONTACT US	17



April – June 2021

1. EDITORIAL

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

It offers updates on preparations and developments related to implementation of the [Ostrava Declaration](#), including how it can be leveraged to support “building forward better”.

Best regards,
EHP Secretariat



2. COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

- In collaboration with the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO ECEH), **Azerbaijan** conducted an epidemiological investigation on accidental poisonings during the COVID-19 pandemic and the health sector response, and formulated proposals for preventive measures in a note submitted to the Ministry of Health. In addition, two documents on methods for the project were approved by the Ministry of Health, training sessions were organized for emergency workers and for hospitals, and an awareness-raising campaign was organized for the public.

On 25 May 2021, the WHO ECEH, in collaboration with the WHO Country Office in Azerbaijan, organized the first consultation with members of the task group mandated to revise the national standard for drinking-water quality in order to discuss the initial scope of the revision in accordance with the health-based drinking-water quality parameters and the risk-based framework for drinking-water quality management

and surveillance in the [WHO Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality](#).

- On 22 April 2021, the WHO ECEH, with colleagues from the WHO Country Office in Belarus, supported a meeting organized by **Belarus** in its capacity as Chair of the [WHO/United Nations \(UN\) Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\) Protocol on Water and Health](#). The meeting was attended by over 70 participants representing 12 countries in eastern Europe, the Caucasus and central Asia. Country representatives exchanged experiences in implementing the Protocol, progress in accession and aspects related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the context of COVID-19.
- In **Georgia**, a technical regulatory act to prohibit lead paints was drafted in collaboration with the WHO ECEH and approved by the Government in April 2021. The Government has adopted the WHO-recommended limit of 90 ppm of lead. The work was conducted in the



framework of a joint WHO, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Global Environment Facility project. In support of national implementation of [WHA resolution 72/7 on WASH in health care facilities](#), WHO ECEH organized a 3-day methodological training workshop (in-person and virtual) on 29–30 June and 1 July 2021 for the first nationwide assessment and survey of WASH conditions in health-care facilities.

- Between 11 and 16 June 2021, the WHO Country Office in **Poland**, in cooperation with WHO ECEH, organized a training workshop on air pollution and health and use of the AirQ+ in Polish.
- **Serbia** developed a national road map on chemicals, “Enhancing health sector engagement/contribution to sound chemicals management in Serbia till 2030”, with relevant stakeholders, which has been submitted for approval to the Ministry of Health. On 16 June 2021 at a high-level meeting, supported technically by WHO ECEH, the Institute of Public Health and the

Ministry of Health launched a project on integrating planning for water and sanitation safety, funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Advisory Assistance Programme.

- **Tajikistan:** On 17 June 2021, WHO ECEH presented the main findings of a national assessment of WASH in health-care facilities at the first meeting of the national coordination group, which is led by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.
- **Turkmenistan:** On 23 June 2021, WHO ECEH and the WHO Country Office organized a meeting with the Ministry of Health to discuss the scope of a plan for national assessment of WASH in health-care facilities under a biennial collaborative agreement for 2020–2021. On 25 June 2021, WHO ECEH organized a meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Hydro-Meteorological Service for a national “heat-health” action plan under the bilateral collaborative agreement.

3. ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND COVID-19

On the occasion of World Environment Day 2021, [WHO joined](#) the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#), a partnership for preventing, halting and reversing degradation of our ecosystems and the diversity of life they sustain. WHO is leading a collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Organisation for Animal Health and UNEP to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and engagement at the human–animal–plant–

environment interface, also known as the “One Health” approach. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration provides an excellent context for such actions and policies.

WHO held the inaugural meeting of the [Expert Working Group on Biodiversity, Climate, One Health and Nature-based Solutions](#) during the Seventy-fourth [World Health Assembly in May 2021](#). The mandate of the Working Group



April – June 2021

is to develop policies and recommendations for promoting a healthy recovery, preventing future health risks associated with ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change and charting a common path towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Similarly, the WHO Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development issued [a call to action](#) to governments and other stakeholders to review

their policy priorities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and upgrade global governance on environment and health.

As a contribution to this agenda, WHO ECEH issued a [report on nature, biodiversity and health](#) on the International Day of Biological Diversity (22 May 2021), summarizing information on the relevance of nature to health and the importance of intersectoral action.

If you wish to share information on how your country is responding to the environment and health dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic with the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) and partners of the EHP, the EHP secretariat will be happy to assist you. Please contact us at euceh@who.int.

4. RECENT EVENTS

- In April 2021, the WHO ECEH launched the European segment of [2021 WHO Health and Climate Change Global Survey](#), which is conducted every 3 years and forms the basis for monitoring global, regional and national progress in building the resilience of the health sector to climate change and for identifying benefits for health from mitigating climate change. The results will provide evidence for ministers of health and other health decision-makers and will be used by WHO and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to prepare Health and Climate Change Country Profiles.
- On 14–15 April 2021, the WHO ECEH and UNECE organized the [12th meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health](#). The group discussed governance matters related

to the Protocol and participated in two special sessions: one with a keynote address by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights to Water and Sanitation and one on financing water and sanitation services (with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank). Another focus of the meeting was recovery from COVID-19 in relation to the regional WASH agenda. The meeting was attended by nearly 100 delegates from the European Region.

- On 21 April 2021, WHO ECEH hosted a webinar, **“Universal access to hand hygiene: How to make it a reality?”**, with colleagues from the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and speakers from several Member States in the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health, with more than 270 participants.



The webinar provided a platform for advocacy for the WHO/UNICEF global initiative on hand hygiene, for intensified national and local action on hand hygiene in public spaces and for exchanging experience.

- On 28 April 2021, WHO ECEH provided technical support to a **meeting on healthy eating and good nutrition in Ukrainian schools**, organized by the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and the WHO Country Office in Ukraine, to promote drinking-water consumption and quality in schools.
- On 5 May 2021, the WHO ECEH hosted a webinar “**Time for heat-health action: Updated evidence for effective prevention**”, with more than 220 attendees. WHO ECEH presented a new publication on [updated evidence on heat-health](#), and speakers from France, Italy and the United Kingdom described their heat-health action plans. During the webinar, WHO ECEH launched its 2021 **#KeepCool campaign** to provide advice to communities and decision-makers on staying healthy in the heat and adapting to rising temperatures in the future (see section 5. for further information on heat-health resources).
- On 7 May 2021, the WHO ECEH released a **new version of AirQ+** (v. 2.1) for quantifying the impacts of air pollution on health, on the website of the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe). The software is available in English, French and Russian, and the German version is being finalized.
- On 10–11 May 2021, the WHO ECEH organized the **24th annual meeting of the Joint Convention/WHO Task Force on the Health Aspects of Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution**. The meeting was attended

by more than 65 participants, including representatives of Parties to the Convention, invited experts and observers, who discussed new international policies and processes related to air quality and health and further developments in WHO tools, including the German language version of AirQ+. Research on the health impacts of air pollution was also presented, including systematic reviews for updating the Global Air Quality Guidelines. Participants also discussed the 2022–2023 work plan of the Task Force on Health, including a contribution to a review of the Gothenburg Protocol.

- WHO ECEH organized two expert group meetings, on 16 April and 12 May 2021, for a new project co-funded by the European Commission, **Sharing Key Air Pollution and Health Information in Europe**. The main aim of the project is to build on [WHO evaluations of the knowledge base and to provide advice on personal interventions](#) and related public health aspects for Europe to respond to new scenarios emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The third **European Public Health Week** was organized on 17–21 May 2021, for which institutions and individuals in 40 countries organized a total of 212 events in 19 languages. The Week is an initiative of the European Public Health Association funded by the European Commission (EC) and supported by WHO/Europe. The call to “join forces for healthier populations” came at an opportune time, as it is clear that COVID-19 can be overcome only if we all work together. Each day of the Week was dedicated to one topic, with 38–47 events per day. About half of the events were organized by at least two institutions, and each day began with a webinar by one of the official partners or collaborators of the Week.



April – June 2021

- The **6th UN Global Road Safety Week** was celebrated on 17–23 May 2021 to mobilize leaders and communities to work together to make roads safer, in the lead up to the launch of the [Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030](#). Policy-makers were urged to institute low-speed streets worldwide by limiting the speed to 30 km/h in areas where people walk, live and play. Participants were called upon to join the #Love30 campaign to call for 30 km/h speed limits to be the norm in cities, towns and villages worldwide.
- On 19–20 May 2021, WHO ECEH hosted the **9th meeting of the Working Group on Health in Climate Change** virtually. The aims of the meeting were to increase promotion of health in climate policies and to mobilize the health community in advocating for higher ambitions for the health sector and leading by example. Another objective was to formulate a regional perspective for a WHO special report to be launched at the [26th Conference of the Parties \(COP26\)](#) of the UNFCCC. The next step will be taken at the 71st WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September, where WHO ECEH will provide a technical briefing on “Elevating climate change in the health debate” and communicate the key messages from the meeting of the Working Group in a position paper for health decision-makers, “*Zero regrets / Scaling up action on climate mitigation and adaptation for health in the WHO European Region*”.
- Urbanization, land use, global trade and industrialization have had profound negative impacts on nature, biodiversity and ecosystems throughout the world. WHO/Europe held a webinar on these complex relations and the vital role of nature in promoting and protecting human health on the **International Day for Biological Diversity** on 22 May 2021 and published its first report on nature, biodiversity and health with the [WHO Collaborating Centre on Natural Environments and Health](#) at the University of Exeter, England (see section 5).
- For **Global Menstrual Hygiene Management Day** on 28 May 2021, WHO ECEH launched [social media messages and tiles](#) to draw attention to menstrual hygiene management in the context of WASH.
- On 28 May 2021, the Department of Environment and Health, Unit of Environmental and Social Epidemiology, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy, was designated a WHO Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health in Contaminated Sites (May 2021–May 2025).
- **European Green Week 2021** (31 May–4 June) was dedicated to the “zero pollution ambition”. The WHO ECEH engaged with stakeholders and interested citizens to discuss working together to realize the ambition for zero pollution and a toxic-free environment. For example, in the European Union (EU) Green Week Partner event on nature-based solutions and health, organized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, WHO presented its work on nature and health and the recent report on [Nature, biodiversity and health](#) (see section 5). At a high-level session on [A healthy environment for healthy lives](#), WHO, colleagues from the European Environment Agency, the Health and Environment Alliance and the EC highlighted the many links between the quality of the environment and the health and well-being of European citizens. The European Green Week was also an opportunity to discuss the findings of a recent WHO report on [Urban redevelopment of contaminated sites](#) (see section 5) in the session on the [Impacts of soil pollution](#).



- [on human health](#). In addition, during the session on [How can Horizon Europe help to reach our Zero Pollution goal?](#), WHO and colleagues from Eurocities and Utrecht University discussed how science, research and innovation on the environment and health could be promoted to ensure that the EU achieves the zero pollution ambition and addresses the main research questions, the science-policy interface and the role of cities.
- On 1 June 2021, WHO ECEH and the UN Development Programme jointly organized a virtual briefing for country office staff on the [Joint Value Proposition and Service Offering: Addressing climate change and health in the Europe and Central Asia region](#). The meeting concluded that adaptation to and mitigation of climate change will require more resilient, sustainable development to address current and future impacts of climate change, including those related to health.
 - On 10 June 2021, WHO hosted a webinar on [Health Leadership on the Road to COP26: Building Climate Resilient & Low Carbon Sustainable Health Systems](#) and provided an overview of the topic. It described the commitments made by countries to the COP26 teams to strengthen climate resilience and environmental sustainability in their health systems.
 - The second meeting of the [Working Group on Greener Cities of the Regional Director's Advisory Council on Innovation for Noncommunicable Diseases](#) was held on 10 June 2021. The participants discussed various suggestions for means to accelerate progress in tackling NCDs. The aim of the Working Group is to discuss the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on health and NCDs, explore links to the European Green Deal and create supportive environments for healthy lifestyles and healthy work, making healthy choices the easiest ones.
 - The **21st meeting of the [Compliance Committee for the Protocol on Water and Health](#)** took place on 15 and 16 June 2021 both in person and online. The Committee reviewed compliance with the obligation to set targets under the Protocol and discussed how compliance with other provisions of the Protocol could be facilitated. WHO ECEH supported the session by preparing a note on interpreting the public health aspects of the Protocol.
 - On 16 June 2021, WHO ECEH organized a meeting to present methods for **assessing health risks due to combined exposure to multiple chemicals in indoor air**, to demonstrate the software IAQRiskCalculator and its functional characteristics and also pilot risk calculations. More than 70 participants from 22 Member States discussed promotion of assessments of the health risks of combined exposure to multiple chemicals in indoor air. For more information about the tool, see section 5.
 - On 17 June 2021, WHO ECEH and the [Union for the Mediterranean](#) hosted a webinar on [Environment and health in seaport cities](#). Speakers gave overviews of the consequences of air, soil, noise and water pollution on the health of the inhabitants of port cities and how those conditions could be addressed from an urban perspective. Case studies were presented of the ports of Dunkirk (France), Haifa (Israel), Rotterdam (Netherlands), Skikda (Algeria) and Southampton (England), with summaries of good practices.



April – June 2021

Top story: European countries adopt Vienna Declaration on clean, safe, healthy transport and the first Pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion

The [Vienna Declaration](#) was signed at the virtual **Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment** (17–18 May 2021), hosted by the Government of Austria and attended by 46 ministers and other representatives of 56 countries in the pan-European region.

The group discussed how substantial changes in transport and mobility systems could be introduced to mitigate challenges such as ambient air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, physical inactivity and NCDs, and social inequity in access to transport and mobility.

Ministers and representatives of European countries also adopted the [Pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion](#), the first such initiative for the Region.

Building on lessons learnt from the pandemic and recognizing the value of public transport systems and of the workers who ensure that these services continue, [recommendations were made on their sustainability and resilience](#).

To support Member States in improving their transport systems and accelerating transformation towards sustainable transport and mobility, the participants adopted a document providing [facts and figures on transport, health and environment](#) prepared with the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Netherlands.

As side events before the conference, a [series of thematic webinars](#) was offered on 10–12 May, with a virtual exhibition. Three international [Youth Forums](#) were held in April 2021, before the high-level ministerial meeting in order to obtain the opinions and experiences of young people for integration into the Plan.

For more information, see the WHO/Europe news story: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/press-releases/2021/european-countries-adopt-vienna-declaration-on-clean-safe-and-healthy-transport-and-first-ever-pan-european-master-plan-for-cycling-promotion>. Photos and videos of the conference are available on the meeting's website: https://thepepvienna2021.org/?lang=en_us.



5. LATEST PUBLICATIONS AND PODCASTS

Publication on urban redevelopment of contaminated sites

This report contains the results of an expert consultation on redeveloping contaminated sites for new urban functions, reviewing the health and environmental impacts of site redevelopment and identifying sound practices and lessons learnt from projects for effective redevelopment of contaminated sites as part of healthy, sustainable urban planning.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/340944>

Publication on e-waste and children's health

This report summarizes the latest scientific evidence on the links between informal e-waste recycling and the health of children. The aim is to increase the awareness of health professionals about the dangers of e-waste recycling to the health of future generations. It is a call to action to reduce children's exposure to harmful e-waste.

The link: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240023901>

Publication on water, sanitation and hygiene

This report presents data on global coverage of and investment in sanitation and how it affects health, economies and the environment. The report charts an ambitious way forward based on the [SDG6 global acceleration framework](#) themes: governance, financing, capacity development, data and information, and innovation to achieve universal access to safe sanitation.

The link: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240014473>



April – June 2021

The UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) data revealed substantial gaps in understanding and tracking of financial flows in the WASH sector. In 2012, WHO developed the TrackFin method for collecting and analysing financial data on WASH. This report provides the key outcomes of use of TrackFin in countries and the lessons learnt.

The link: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240014473>

Publication on clean, safe and healthy transport

This publication presents numerous initiatives under way in Austria to implement the priorities of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme and “build forward better” by transforming transport systems to ensure clean, safe, healthy, inclusive mobility and transport.

The link: https://thepepvienna2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/EN_THEPEP-AT_Bros_2021-05-27_UA.pdf

Publication on nature, biodiversity and health

This report provides an overview of impacts of the natural environment on human health. It describes how nature and ecosystems support and protect health and well-being and how nature degradation and loss of biodiversity threaten human health. The report is available in English and Russian.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341376>



April – June 2021

Assessment of health risks from combined exposure to multiple chemicals in indoor air in public settings for children

This publication describes development of a tool for assessing the health risks of combined exposure to multiple chemicals in indoor air in public settings for children. The approach is based on the WHO International Programme on Chemical Safety framework for risk assessment of exposure to multiple chemicals. The publication includes descriptions of the methods, assumptions, limitations and uncertainties.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341708>

This publication summarizes scientific evidence on the effects of exposure to chemical pollutants in indoor air on children's health; on chemicals commonly detected in indoor air in schools, pre-schools and day-care centres; and on the likelihood of co-occurrence of these chemicals. It served as a background document for selecting priority adverse health effects and chemicals to be included in the WHO/Europe's screening tool for assessing risks from exposure to multiple chemicals in indoor air in public settings for children.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341467>

This publication presents the questionnaire used to select sampling sites for assessing the risks associated with exposure to multiple chemicals in indoor air in public settings for children. It includes indoor and outdoor factors relevant to indoor air pollution. The approach to answering questions (yes/no) is simple. Public-health workers can use the questionnaire to select sampling sites in schools, pre-schools and day-care centres where indoor air pollution is a concern.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341466>

This publication provides a course on different aspects of chemical pollution of indoor air and its risk for children's health, including the principles of risk assessment and communication. It was created in the context of the WHO project on the risks of exposure to multiple chemicals in indoor air. The educational material can be used for training and awareness-raising for a wide range of professionals involved in promoting healthy indoor environments for children.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341984>



April – June 2021

Publication on prevention of violence against children

This publication explores the progress that countries have made in achieving the SDGs and targets for ending violence against children by 2030 through the seven [INSPIRE](#) evidence-based strategies for ending violence against children.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341048>

Publication on sustainable development

This report presents an analysis of policy, governance and activities for achieving health and well-being for all at all ages and the SDGs in Member States in the WHO European Region. The findings can be used by health stakeholders to identify solutions that they can adapt to their institution, community or country for achieving the goals for health and well-being and, ultimately, the SDGs.

The link: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/339795>

Must-read picks for hot summer and heat waves:

WHO ECEH has launched new heat–health resources to support preparedness and response to heat-waves, including a social media campaign and a news story:

- News story on **“Keep cool this summer to protect your health”** has gone live on our website to highlight the issue and present our new materials: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/Climate-change/news/news/2021/5/keep-cool-this-summer-to-protect-your-health>
- Four short **video clips featuring public health advice** on how people can “Keep cool in the heat” (available in English, French, German and Russian): https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLL4_zLP7J_mjqWnqvIUSnQ13NcSuSDgU3



- Updated information sheet (two-sided A4) on “**Health advice for hot weather during the COVID-19 outbreak**” (available in 13 European languages): <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/publications-and-technical-guidance/environment-and-food-safety/health-advice-for-hot-weather-during-the-covid-19-outbreak-produced-by-who-europe>



- Social media tiles** for Twitter, Instagram and Facebook with the key messages in four languages (an editable PowerPoint slide for other languages is available upon request): <https://who.canto.global/v/coronavirus/library?keyword=Keepcool>

Podcast on building fairer, healthier societies: an interview with Public Health Wales

This podcast illustrates how health authorities in Wales took on a leadership role to respond to the infectious COVID-19 pandemic and are now entering a new phase, which requires mitigating the broader harms of the pandemic and reducing inequities that have been exacerbated and threaten to undermine recovery, such as impacts on learning, underlying health conditions, living environments and loss of income.

6. EHP CORNER

- On 27 May 2021, WHO ECEH and the WHO European Healthy Cities Network Working Group on Environment and Health organized the **second meeting of the Working Group on Collaboration of Local and Subnational Authorities** (CoLSA), a body established by the EHTF to advance implementation of the Ostrava Declaration. CoLSA working group members and partners from international networks discussed developments relevant to CoLSA activities and partnerships and reviewed actions, responsibilities and resource availability for implementing the programme of work of CoLSA adopted by the members of the EHTF at its tenth meeting (17–18 February 2021).
- On 15 June 2021, members of the EHTF Bureau and interested Member States met at the **7th EHTF Bureau meeting** to discuss implementation of the EHP Roadmap towards the next Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, including the programme of the “Bonn Dialogues



April – June 2021

on Environment and Health”, the draft Programme of Work of EHTF for 2022–2023 and preparation of the 11th meeting of the EHTF, tentatively scheduled for December 2021.

- We take this opportunity to thank EHTF members for their contributions to revising the **Rules of Procedure of the EHTF**, which were adopted by the EHTF at its tenth meeting. For more information, please access the WHO/Europe website [here](#).

In focus: France continues to lead an ambitious policy to reduce the impact of environmental change on health.

In this Newsletter issue, we congratulate France – a champion of the environment and health!

Consistent with its long-standing commitment to advancing the environment and health agenda, France has implemented three successive national environmental health action plans that have ensured significant progress in reducing environmental health impacts throughout its territory. For example, since 2004, there have been 50–80% reductions in airborne emissions of dangerous industrial substances; a ban on bisphenol A in cash register receipts; mandatory monitoring of indoor air quality in day-care centres and schools; and a ban on the use of perchloroethylene in dry-cleaning.

In June 2021, **France published its 4th National Environmental Health Action Plan**, its National Portfolio of Actions, to limit exposures and their associated risks for humans, animals and ecosystems and contribute to One Health and commitments to the Ostrava Declaration and the European Green Deal. The Plan will also provide information, raise awareness and improve understanding of the links between environment and health through research. The Plan is the result of collaboration among the many stakeholders in the Environmental Health Group, a national body responsible for monitoring implementation of the Plan.

The four areas of the Plan are to:

- learn about, provide training in and inform the population about the state of the environment and good practices for improving the health of humans and ecosystems;
- reduce environmental exposures that affect human health and the health of ecosystems throughout the Region;
- increase the measures implemented by regional bodies; and
- achieve better understanding of exposures and the impacts on environmental health, the population and ecosystems.

For more information about France’s achievements, please visit the EHP SharePoint at <https://worldhealthorg.sharepoint.com/sites/ws-EEHP/default.aspx>.



7. NEWS FROM EHP STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

Happy 50th anniversary to the UNECE!

For half a century, UNECE has been the leading UN organization in environmental protection and improving environmental governance in the pan-European region.

Join us on our journey through the years – from the cold war and reconstruction to the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. For more information, please visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/50y-env-unece/50yenvunece>

Urban sustainability in Europe – opportunities for challenging times

It is becoming increasingly clear that the complex, interrelated challenges of climate change, environmental degradation and increasing inequality will be resolved only by a fundamental transformation of our societies. Important system innovations are occurring in cities around the world. In this regard, the

[European Environment Agency](#) has published some interesting material:

- report on [Urban Sustainability in Europe. What is driving cities' environmental change?](#)
- briefing on [Urban sustainability in Europe – opportunities in challenging times](#)

Global methane assessment: Benefits and costs of mitigating methane emissions

The [assessment](#) by the [Climate & Clean Air Coalition](#) with [UNEP](#) highlights the critical role of reducing methane emissions, including from the fossil fuel industry, in slowing the rate of global warming. The benefits of action include a rapid reduction in global warming, which will

help prevent dangerous climate tipping points; better air quality, which will save hundreds of thousands of lives; better food security, by preventing crop losses; and creation of jobs in mitigation with increased productivity due to reduced heat stress.

Call for declarations by health systems to decarbonize and build resilience

If the global health-care sector were a country, it would be the [fifth largest greenhouse gas emitter on the planet](#). Therefore, decarbonization of the sector will protect public health from climate change. In the lead-up to COP26, ministries of health and governments are being encouraged by the UNFCCC, WHO and Health

Care Without Harm to declare their ambitions to both decarbonize and improve the resilience of their health-care sectors. [Health Care Without Harm](#) has several initiatives to support health systems on this path, including the recently launched [Global Road Map for Health Care Decarbonization](#) and [Operation Zero](#).



8. UPCOMING EVENTS

launch of WHO global air quality guidelines (third quarter 2021);

11th conference of health-enhancing physical activity Europe and 16th annual meeting (Nice, France, 1–3 September 2021);

71st session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (Copenhagen, Denmark, 13–15 September 2021);

technical briefing “Elevating climate change in the health debate” (online, 16 September 2021, 09:00–10:30 CEST);

regional meeting on on-site sanitation (hosted virtually by Serbia, 28–29 September 2021);

online course: climate change negotiations and health (please see available sessions: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/online-course-climate-negotiations-health>); and

Bonn Environmental Health School, to be held virtually during November 2021. More information will follow.



9. CONTACT US

WHO European Centre for Environment and Health

Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1

D-53113 Bonn, Germany

Tel. (switchboard): +49 228 8150 400

Fax: +49 228 81 50 440

E-mail: euceh@who.int

© World Health Organization 2021. Some rights reserved. This work is available under the [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/) license.