

75th WHO Regional Committee for Europe
Copenhagen, October 2025

**Strategic action to achieve the goals of the European Programme of Work 2020–2025 and the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Statement by
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Honourable Chair, Director-General, Regional Director, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) commends WHO EURO and its Member States for the continued strategic leadership under the European Programme of Work (EPW) 2020–2025, *“United Action for Better Health in Europe,”* and their alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The EPW’s focus on strengthening health systems, protecting against health emergencies, and promoting health and well-being for all is more relevant than ever in an era shaped by migration, climate change, and emerging public health threats.

Across the WHO European Region, migration remains a defining driver of demographic and social transformation. Millions of migrants including refugees, displaced persons, migrant workers and returnees contribute to our economies, societies, and health systems. Yet, many still face barriers in accessing care and protection, particularly those in irregular situations or living in humanitarian contexts. The inclusion of migrants and displaced populations in national health systems, regardless of legal status, is a cornerstone of both health equity and pandemic preparedness.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that gaps in inclusion weaken collective resilience. Preparedness for future pandemics must therefore build upon the lessons learned: inclusive surveillance, accessible health information, equitable access to vaccines and essential services, and protection mechanisms for mobile and frontline populations.

In this regard, IOM and WHO share a long-standing and strategic partnership that bridges policy, practice, and advocacy. Together, we are advancing migration health governance; supporting Member States in integrating mobility considerations into health emergency preparedness; and mobilizing resources for inclusive, sustainable health systems that leave no one behind. One good example of this is the joint European Union, IOM and WHO initiative to strengthen health systems in 10 refugee-receiving countries to achieve the best health outcome for host populations, refugees and displaced people from Ukraine.

IOM also recognizes WHO EURO’s leadership in promoting sustainable health financing under the EPW. Ensuring that migrants are part of universal health coverage frameworks is not only a moral imperative but a practical economic investment which reduces preventable costs and strengthening system efficiency. Innovative financing mechanisms, coupled with policy coherence across migration, health, and social protection sectors, can make inclusion both sustainable and transformative.

Looking ahead, IOM reaffirms its commitment to the joint pursuit of the EPW goals and the 2030 Agenda. Through policy advocacy, technical cooperation, and operational support across Europe and Central Asia, we stand ready to:

- Support Member States in inclusive pandemic preparedness and mobility-informed health security planning;
- Advance integration of migrants into national health systems, including financing and data frameworks;
- Strengthen joint programming and resource mobilization to address cross-border health challenges; and
- Promote whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that ensure health for all, everywhere.

Achieving the EPW's vision of "leaving no one behind" requires recognizing that the health of migrants, regardless of their legal status, as well as displaced persons is inseparable from the health of communities. IOM remains a committed partner to WHO EURO and its Member States in realizing this vision—through joint leadership, shared accountability, and collective action for resilient, inclusive, and sustainable health systems.

Thank you.

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