



**Sixteenth meeting of the European Environment and
Health Task Force (EHTF) Bureau**

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**Draft Programme of Work for the European Environment and Health
Task Force for 2026–2027**

The Programme of Work (PoW) for 2026–2027 is based on the outline endorsed by the EHTF Bureau at its fifteenth meeting in December 2025. It defines the strategic priorities and main areas of work for the biennium.

The PoW was prepared by the Secretariat, considering inputs from the Chair and Co-Chairs, and is submitted to the EHTF Bureau for review, before being shared with the full EHTF for further consultation and adoption.

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1. Introduction

1. Since the adoption of the [Budapest Declaration](#) and its Roadmap in 2023, countries of the WHO European Region have been working to strengthen policies and actions that protect people's health and the environments on which it depends, in line with the commitments set out in the Declaration. To support implementation, countries established a new collaborative mechanism – [EHP Partnerships](#).
2. At the same time, the context for implementing these commitments continues to evolve. Health and environmental conditions have been influenced by a range of interconnected factors, including geopolitical developments, climate change, demographic trends, the growing burden of noncommunicable diseases, and rapid technological change.
3. The EHTF serves as the main intergovernmental platform for coordinating, advancing and monitoring the implementation of these commitments. This PoW provides the framework for its work during the 2026–2027 biennium.

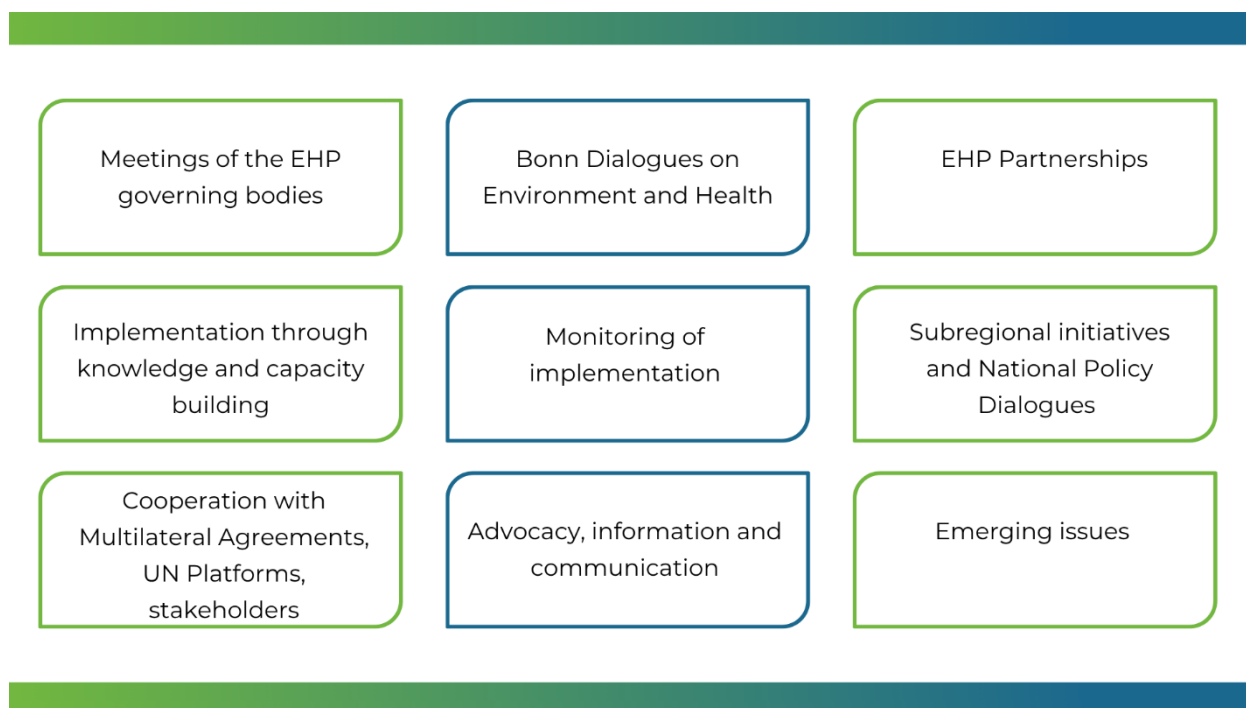
2. Strategic framing

4. The PoW for 2026–2027 is guided by the priorities set out in the [Budapest Declaration](#), which also reaffirms commitments made at previous Ministerial Conferences, and is aligned with broader global and regional policy frameworks, including:
 - The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
 - WHO's Global Strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change;
 - Outcomes and key decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conferences of the Parties;
 - WHO's European Programme of Work;
 - WHO's Fourteenth General Programme of Work;
 - The New Urban Agenda and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions;
 - Regional and subregional policy frameworks such as the European Green Deal;
 - The Global and Regional Quadripartite Agenda on One Health;
 - The Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - The upcoming WHO European Regional Strategy on tackling noncommunicable diseases and advancing health promotion and well-being 2027–2037.
5. Rather than introducing new or resource-intensive initiatives, the PoW focuses on consolidating and advancing existing efforts. The aim is to maintain and further strengthen the EHTF as a strategic platform for policy dialogue, coordination, knowledge exchange and capacity building across the WHO European Region.

3. Priority areas of work

6. The work is organised around several priority areas that support the implementation of the Budapest Declaration and strengthen cooperation across the European Environment and Health Process (EHP), as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1. Priority areas of the PoW for 2026–2027



3.1 Meetings of the EHP Governing Bodies

7. According to the [EHTF Rules of Procedure](#), the EHTF meets once per year. The 16th and 17th meetings are therefore expected to take place in 2026 and 2027 (Table 1). Member States have expressed strong support for holding these meetings in person.

Table 1. EHTF sessions

Objectives	<p>The 16th and 17th sessions of the EHTF, planned for 2026 and 2027, will review progress and guide implementation of the Budapest Declaration and its Roadmap under the EHP.</p> <p>The sessions will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review progress in the implementation of the Budapest commitments, including policy developments and actions taken at the national level; • take stock of developments within the EHP Partnerships and provide strategic guidance on their future direction and priorities; • provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and technical expertise among Member States and partners, supporting peer learning and dissemination of good practices; • discuss emerging environment and health challenges and explore possible policy responses, including issues that may require coordinated regional action; • conduct the election of the EHTF Bureau at the 2027 session, in accordance with the EHTF Rules of Procedure;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support collaboration and resource mobilization to advance implementation of the Budapest commitments.
Participants	Members of the EHTF and its Bureau, as well as invited speakers or partners.
Language	EHTF meetings are conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation into Russian.
Venue	The 16th session will be held in autumn 2026. The location will be announced at the 16th Bureau meeting. EHTF members are invited to express interest in hosting the 17th session in 2027.
Resources needed	The estimated cost of an in-person EHTF session is approximately USD 80 000–100 000 per session.

8. The EHTF Bureau is expected to convene twice a year in a virtual format. The Bureau meetings will support preparation of the annual EHTF sessions and review progress and discuss key developments (Table 2).

Table 2. EHTF Bureau meetings

Objectives	<p>During the 2026–2027 biennium, four meetings of the EHTF Bureau are planned, with two meetings held each year.</p> <p>The first meeting of the year will focus on preparing the annual EHTF session and discussing key priorities for the year ahead.</p> <p>The second meeting, held toward the end of the year, will take stock of progress and discuss key developments in implementation of the Budapest Declaration.</p>
Participants	Members of the EHTF Bureau. Meetings are open to all EHTF members.
Language	EHTF Bureau meetings are conducted in English.
Format	Bureau meetings will be held online.
Resources needed	Meetings will be supported through the regular work of the EHP Secretariat.

9. The Working Group on Health in Climate Change (HIC) will meet once a year to facilitate dialogue among Member States and stakeholders on protecting health from the impacts of climate change and to support the implementation of relevant EHP commitments (Table 3).

Table 3. Health in Climate Change (HIC) Working Group

Objectives	<p>Two meetings of the HIC Working Group are planned during the biennium.</p> <p>The meetings will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support cooperation among Member States on climate change and health within the framework of the Budapest Declaration; • review developments and share experiences on integrating health considerations into climate change policies; • promote the exchange of knowledge, research and good practices related to climate change and health; • discuss approaches to strengthening the resilience of health and environmental systems to climate change and extreme weather events; • support efforts to promote climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health systems.
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Participants	Members of the HIC Working Group, as well as relevant stakeholders and partners.
Language	Meetings will be conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation into Russian.
Venue	As many HIC members are also members of the EHTF, meetings may be organized back-to-back with EHTF sessions and held in person, where feasible; otherwise, they may be conducted virtually.
Resources needed	Costs will depend on the meeting format. A standalone physical meeting is estimated at approximately USD 50 000–70 000 per meeting; costs may be lower if organized back-to-back with EHTF sessions. Virtual meetings require minimal resources.

10. Efforts will be made to ensure inclusive participation, including opportunities for observer participation, in line with principles of transparency and openness.

3.2 EHP Partnerships

11. The EHP Partnerships, launched at the Budapest Conference, will continue to serve as a core implementation mechanism for the [Budapest Declaration](#) and its Roadmap, advancing their thematic agendas through collaborative activities such as joint initiatives, technical exchanges, capacity-building, and the dissemination and uptake of relevant WHO norms, standards and tools.

12. The following six EHP Partnerships are currently active, led or co-led by nine Member States and involving over 40 countries:

- EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action;
- EHP Partnership on Human Biomonitoring;
- EHP Partnership on Poison Centres;
- EHP Partnership on Risk Reduction in the School Environment;
- EHP Partnership on Youth;
- Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)/EHP Partnership on Healthy Active Mobility.

13. Each Partnership will organize its own meetings and implement its workplan, bringing together countries and partners within its thematic area.

14. Each Partnership will report regularly to the EHTF, which will provide overall oversight and strategic guidance. The Secretariat will facilitate coordination and knowledge sharing among the Partnerships and promote synergies with relevant initiatives. This includes preparing the annual summary of the Partnerships' work and maintaining the Partnerships virtual workspaces.

15. The establishment of new EHP Partnerships is not envisaged during the biennium unless supported by clear financial arrangements and committed leadership from Member States or partners.

3.3 Implementation through knowledge, capacity building, leadership and diplomacy

16. Implementation of the Budapest commitments will be advanced through knowledge, capacity-building and policy support, focusing on:

- strengthening technical capacities;
- promoting the use of existing WHO tools, guidance, and normative materials; and
- encouraging the application of health diplomacy approaches, including environment and health-related discussions and negotiations.

17. Subject to the availability of resources, the Bonn School on Environment and Health will continue to serve as a platform for strengthening technical and leadership capacities with a focus on accelerating the implementation of the Budapest commitments.
18. Work will continue on developing professional profiles for the environment and health workforce. The profiles will outline key areas of expertise, required competencies and skills, and reflect global and regional trends. Following a consultation process, the outcomes will inform decision-makers on the capacities needed to address emerging environment and health challenges.
19. In an increasingly complex and evolving geopolitical context, the EHP continues to serve as a technical and policy platform. Given the cross-cutting and universal nature of environment and health, it can also contribute beyond its core functions to wider engagement across countries and sectors. This may include supporting the use of health diplomacy approaches, including by strengthening capacities in negotiation, strategic communication and evidence-based policymaking.

3.4 Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health

20. The [Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health](#) were initially established to support the identification of priority directions for the Budapest Conference and have since evolved into a platform for focused policy discussions on key priorities of the [Budapest Declaration](#).
21. The EHTF Bureau encouraged the continuation of the Bonn Dialogues during the current biennium, with a focus on practical implementation challenges, emerging issues and opportunities for collaboration. The Dialogues will continue to bring together Member States, international organizations, experts and other stakeholders to exchange experiences and highlight concrete initiatives, with topics aligned with the priorities of the Budapest Declaration and its Roadmap to 2030.
22. The proposed topics for 2026 are [menstrual health promotion](#) and One Health. The EHTF Bureau will assist in identifying priority themes, speakers and potential lead countries for each Dialogue. EHTF members are encouraged to propose topics and contributors. The Dialogues will remain open to participation from Member States, relevant stakeholders and experts.
23. The EHP Secretariat will facilitate the organization of the Dialogues, including coordination with lead countries and speakers, communication with participants, dissemination of relevant information and materials, and provision of interpretation services.
24. The Bonn Dialogues will remain ongoing activities open to all Member States and EHP stakeholders, with the calendar and related materials available on the EHP SharePoint platform.

3.5 Monitoring of implementation

25. Monitoring progress under the [Budapest Declaration](#) is an important element of the EHP. In 2025, the EHP Secretariat piloted an [online mechanism](#) to facilitate the collection and exchange of information on actions undertaken by Member States and stakeholders. The tool was approved by the EHTF as a useful instrument for collecting updates on implementation.
26. While the tool remains open for further feedback, it will be used during the current biennium to support monitoring of progress. It is based on a user friendly and concise

online survey designed to capture national and sub-national policies, initiatives and experiences related to the priorities of the [Budapest Declaration](#).

27. Participation in the monitoring mechanism is voluntary. EHTF members are invited to contribute information through the online platform. The inputs will be periodically summarized by the Secretariat and shared with the EHTF to support discussions on progress, challenges and opportunities for collaboration.
28. At the same time, the EHTF will continue to promote the use of National Portfolios of Actions on Environment and Health as a practical tool for tracking and supporting the implementation at national, sub-national and local levels. Monitoring efforts will be aligned with existing reporting frameworks, including the SDGs and relevant national mechanisms, to reduce duplication and enhance coherence.

3.6 Subregional initiatives and national policy dialogues

29. To reflect the diversity of challenges and capacities across the WHO European Region, the EHTF and the Secretariat will facilitate subregional consultations, where requested. These consultations may focus on shared priorities and support coordinated approaches to implementing the [Budapest Declaration](#) in subregions such as Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Western Balkans.
30. Subregional editions of the Bonn Dialogues may also be organized to address specific regional priorities, in collaboration with WHO-led networks such as the Small Countries Initiative, the European Healthy Cities Network and the Regions for Health Network. These exchanges will strengthen cooperation, facilitate the sharing of practical experience and promote coordinated action among countries facing similar environment and health challenges.
31. In addition, the EHTF will continue to support relevant WHO subregional initiatives, including roadmaps for health and well-being in Central Asia and the Western Balkans, and will coordinate with other regional platforms such as the EU Green Deal and the Arctic Council.
32. At the national level, and upon request, the EHP Secretariat and the EHTF may facilitate country-specific policy dialogues. These dialogues will support multisectoral engagement and help translate regional commitments into practical national action.

3.7 Country-specific activities through bilateral agreements

33. The EHP Secretariat will continue to collaborate with Member States through WHO Biennial Collaborative Agreements and other bilateral or multilateral arrangements. These activities are demand-driven and tailored to country priorities, and may include:
 - technical support on thematic areas such as air quality, climate-resilient health systems, and chemical safety;
 - development or revision of National Portfolios of Actions on Environment and Health;
 - support for the uptake and application of WHO tools, guidance, and standards.
34. This country-specific approach helps ensure that regional commitments are translated into practical action, while remaining aligned with national contexts and priorities.

3.8 Cooperation with Multilateral Agreements, UN Platforms and stakeholders

35. Given the cross-cutting nature of the [Budapest Declaration](#), the PoW prioritizes stronger synergies with relevant international commitments and regional frameworks, including:

- The Protocol on Water and Health;
- THE PEP;
- The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution;
- The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions;
- The Convention on Biological Diversity;
- The Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Espoo Convention.

36. The EHTF will also maintain engagement with broader UNECE and UNEP platforms, as well as relevant European Union policy frameworks.

37. In addition, EHTF will deepen cooperation with civil society, professional associations and youth networks. The [Budapest Youth Declaration](#) will continue to provide a foundation for meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes and for supporting youth leadership and capacity development within the EHP.

3.9 Advocacy, information and communication

38. In an increasingly complex information environment, effective communication, including the use of social media and digital channels, is increasingly important to ensure visibility, transparency and active engagement across sectors and stakeholders. It will support the dissemination of reliable information, help prevent and address misinformation and miscommunication, and strengthen environment and health literacy across the Region.

39. During the 2026–2027 biennium, the EHTF members, in collaboration with communications experts at country level, will strengthen information-sharing by promoting regular country updates on national developments, priorities and relevant events. These updates will ensure that timely information and opportunities for collaboration are shared across ministries, institutions and stakeholder groups at national level, reducing information gaps and misalignment.

40. Country updates will also serve as a basis for targeted communication through social media and digital channels, helping to amplify key messages, increase the visibility of national actions and reach wider audiences across the Region.

41. The information collected will further support tracking progress, sharing practical experiences and identifying opportunities for joint action in addressing the health dimensions of the “triple crisis” brought by the intertwining of climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss.

42. The EHP Newsletter will remain a key outreach tool for regularly disseminating updates on major initiatives, publications and upcoming opportunities across the Region. The EHP website and social media channels will promote key activities, highlight results and increase visibility among wider audiences. The EHP SharePoint platform will continue to serve as a centralized repository for EHTF-related documents, including meeting materials and background resources, while dedicated virtual workspaces will support day-to-day coordination and exchange within each EHP Partnership.

43. The Secretariat will promote key events and milestones and conduct targeted outreach to UN agencies and international partners to reinforce support for the Budapest Declaration and its implementation. These efforts aim to strengthen alignment with global processes, expand partnerships, attract additional collaborators and funding, and ensure consistent and strategic messaging throughout the biennium.

3.10 Emerging issues

44. The environment and health landscape is evolving rapidly, with new and interconnected risks emerging alongside longstanding challenges. Particular attention will be given to the growing links between environment, health and security, including the health impacts of environmental degradation, climate-related risks and disruptions to essential systems such as water, energy and food. Addressing these issues requires stronger cross-sectoral coordination and better integration of health into preparedness, resilience and risk management frameworks.
45. The EHP will also explore the implications of digital transformation, including the use of artificial intelligence and data-driven tools. This includes opportunities to improve data analysis, monitoring and decision-making, as well as the need to address potential risks related to data quality, governance, ethics and equity.
46. Additional emerging issues may include new patterns of exposure to environmental risks, technological developments, and evolving societal trends (including urbanization and ageing populations) that influence health outcomes. The EHTF will provide a platform to identify such issues, facilitate exchange among Member States, and consider appropriate policy responses, including through dedicated sessions, Bonn Dialogues or targeted expert discussions.

4. Conclusions and way forward

47. The PoW for 2026–2027 is designed as a phase of consolidation and focus leading towards the next Ministerial Conference. It aims to build on the momentum of the Budapest Declaration by strengthening coordination, making effective use of existing mechanisms, and enhancing collaboration, while remaining realistic about current financial and human resource constraints.
48. The EHTF will continue to play a central role as the main intergovernmental platform for policy dialogue, coordination and strategic guidance on environment and health in the WHO European Region.
49. The PoW will remain flexible and responsive while continuing to reflect the core principles and commitments of the EHP, including challenges on intersecting megatrends from increasing health threats to climate change, environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, demographic shifts, the growing influence of digital environments and the evolving role of environment and health governance in a rapidly changing global context.