



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

EURO/EHTFB16

Virtual
20 May 2026

30 June 2026
Original: English

Draft meeting highlights

Background and introduction

The WHO European Centre for Environment, Climate Change and Health (WHO ECEH), acting in its capacity as Secretariat of the European Environment and Health Process (EHP), supported the EHTF Chair and co-Chair in the organization and conduct of the Bureau meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Raquel Duarte-Davidson. Ms Brigit Staatsen served as acting co-Chair, in agreement with Ms Maia Javakhishvili, who followed the meeting online while on duty abroad.

Participants

The meeting was attended by representatives from 26 Member States of the WHO European Region and 5 stakeholders, including youth representatives.

Overall scope

The meeting focused on:

- Strengthening collaboration and joint planning of EHTF activities for 2026–2027 and beyond, in line with the Programme of Work (PoW).
- Preparing for the Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health, including discussions on potential topics for second half of 2026 and 2027.
- Planning the next EHTF meeting, including its overall focus, possible session formats, potential speakers.

Summary of main agreements

- Ireland announced that it will host the next EHTF meeting in Maynooth¹ (easily accessible university town located approximately 30 minutes by car and approximately one hour by public transport from Dublin Airport) on 24–26 November 2026. A save-the-date communication will be shared with the full EHTF following the Bureau meeting.
- The Bureau's deliberations will guide the further finalisation of the PoW and inform the preparation of a provisional agenda for the next EHTF meeting, to be submitted to the full EHTF for consultation.
- The guiding discussion questions raised during the sessions would remain open until the 6 July 2026:
 - [PoW of the EHTF](#);
 - [Preparations for the next EHTF meeting](#).
- EHTF members were encouraged to consult with national authorities regarding the possibility of hosting or co-hosting future EHTF meetings. A call for expressions of interest to host the 2027 EHTF meeting will be launched in summer 2026.

¹ The meeting location has been updated to Maynooth following confirmation from the host after the meeting. During the Bureau meeting discussion, the venue was referred to as “Dublin or a nearby city”.

The following sections provide a more detailed overview of the key discussions and decisions summarized above and are organized according to the main topics of the meeting sessions (Annex 1).

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda and programme

1. Following the introduction of the scope and purpose of the meeting, participants adopted the agenda as proposed.
2. A key highlight of the session was the announcement of the host country for the next EHTF meeting:

Ireland will host the 16th EHTF meeting: 24–26 November 2026, Ireland

On behalf of the Department of Health in Ireland, Colin O’Hehir, member of the EHTF Bureau, announced Ireland’s offer to host the next EHTF meeting in Maynooth, aligned with Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2026.

“I hope that everyone will feel inspired to chat and exchange ideas when they are here in Ireland.”

— Colin O’Hehir, Ireland



3. The meeting convened 37 participants from 26 countries, including EHTF Bureau members and EHP focal points, alongside five stakeholder representatives and the EHP Secretariat.



16th EHTF MEETING

MAYNOOTH

IRELAND

24–26 NOVEMBER 2026



2. EHTF Programme of Work for 2026–2027

4. The proposed draft of the PoW, developed in close consultation with the Chair, co-Chair and EHTF members, reflects the feedback received during the latest EHTF Bureau meeting in December 2025 and during a subsequent consultation.
5. The PoW is designed to guide the work of the EHTF during 2026–2027. It focuses on supporting the implementation of the Budapest Declaration by strengthening coordination, partnership, effective use of existing implementation mechanisms, and enhancing collaboration, while remaining realistic about current financial and human resource constraints.
6. The PoW is structured around several core pillars, listed in the Table below.

Table 1. Strategic areas of work guiding implementation of the PoW

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| EHTF, its Bureau, Working Group on HIC | Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health | EHP Partnerships |
| Implementation through knowledge and capacity | Monitoring of implementation | Subregional initiatives and National Policy Dialogues |
| Advocacy, information and communication | Cooperation with Multilateral Agreements, UN | Emerging issues |

7. A number of new topics were proposed for future Bonn Dialogues, including environment and health within a One Health approach in the second half of 2026, as well as chemical pollution and disease prevention, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, and exposome science and policy to better understand lifetime environmental exposures and inform preventive action. The latter chemicals-related topic could be led by the Health and Environment Alliance and UN Environment Programme. The Bonn Dialogue on environmental public health surveillance, to be led by the UK Health Security Agency, was also welcomed.
8. Meeting participants were invited to submit written feedback on the draft PoW by 6 July 2026, either by responding to a set of [guiding questions](#) or by sending comments directly to the Secretariat at euceh@who.int. The Secretariat will further refine the document and share with the full EHTF ahead of its adoption at the 16th EHTF meeting.

9. Also, for the Bureau's interest and awareness, EHP Partnership leads provided updates on key achievements since the beginning of 2026. A brief recap is presented in the Table 2 below. The annual summary of the EHP Partnerships work will be prepared by the Secretariat ahead of the next EHTF meeting.

Table 2. Snapshot of updates from EHP Partnerships

| Health Sector Climate Action (led by Ireland) | Human Biomonitoring (led by Germany and Georgia) |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium led a deep dive on pharmaceutical sustainability, while North Macedonia will lead a deep dive on health and heat waves later in 2026. The Partnership will have its meeting on 6–7 July 2026. • Membership continues to expand, with Slovenia joining the Partnership as its 12th member. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montenegro expressed interest in hosting the 4th Annual Meeting, tentatively scheduled for November 2026. • Partnership expanded further, with Slovenia joining as its 23rd member. |
| Poison Centres (led by the UK and EAPCCT*) | Risk Reduction in School Environment (led by Hungary) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership finalized its two-year work programme and will hold the 7th Meeting of the Partnership in Vilnius (hybrid) in May 2026. • A proposal was put forward for a Bonn Dialogue on environmental public health surveillance. • Partnership will collaborate with youth to raise awareness and promote action on poisoning prevention. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serbia and Sweden are joining the Partnership and Portugal expressed interest. • A hybrid event on risk reduction in school environments will take place in June 2026. • Countries were invited to share national experiences and good practices to inform the Partnership's work. |
| Youth (led by Slovenia) | Healthy Active Mobility (led by Austria, France and Netherlands (Kingdom of the)) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership aims to expand its social media presence. • Online regional consultations on planetary health are planned in collaboration with the WHO Youth Council. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion and the Pan-European Master Plan for Walking is advancing. • Urban Mobility Days will take place in Vilnius. • Exploration is underway for an International Day for Walking, proposed for 27 April. |

* The European Association of Poison Centres and Clinical Toxicologists

3. Preparations for the upcoming EHTF meeting

10. Meeting participants were invited to co-design format and engagement approaches for the next EHTF in person meeting. A brief summary of ideas is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Possible engagement formats and approached for the EHTF meeting in Ireland

- **Key note speakers:** Inspiring voices from within and beyond the environment and health field to stimulate fresh thinking on emerging topics.
 - **EHP Partnerships’ spotlight:** Dedicated sessions enabling deeper engagement with individual EHP Partnerships, complemented by a joint plenary overview of progress and priorities.
 - **Dynamic session formats:** Shorter presentations and interventions, combined with interactive discussions and networking opportunities, to promote broader participation, active engagement and peer exchange.
 - **Walking discussions:** Small-group, informal discussions on current and emerging themes, creating space for reflection and peer exchange, with optional audio capture of key insights.
 - **Youth-led engagement:** Sessions building on collaboration with the EHP Partnership on Youth, alongside Irish youth organisations and universities, to bring youth perspectives and lived experience into discussions.
 - **Climate change and health:** An exchange on COP31 outcomes and other recent developments, including emerging policies, initiatives and technical guidance, and their relevance for the work of the EHTF.
 - **Cross-event synergies:** Leverage the EHTF meeting’s parallel timing with discussions on One Health and [youth mental health](#) to draw on cross-cutting insights and adjacent conversations.
11. Bureau members stressed the importance of early agenda-setting for the next EHTF meeting and noted that, if needed, a concept note outlining emerging priorities and topics could help guide preparations and enable timely cross-sectoral engagement. To support this process, for example, the online poll could be used to gather country perspectives on emerging priorities ahead of the EHTF meeting, helping to inform the development of the concept note.
12. At the same time, discussions on preparations for the next EHTF meeting highlighted several emerging priorities that could be explored further, including the use of artificial intelligence in environment and health, as well as improved approaches to data collection and monitoring to better translate commitments into measurable impact.
13. In this context, the EHP Secretariat presented innovative, behavioural science-informed approaches to gathering insights on the implementation of the Budapest commitments while reducing reporting burden and capturing meaningful experiences. Meeting participants expressed support for a blended approach, combining quick polls, visual snapshots and voice recordings, to enrich data collection and encourage greater engagement, with the Secretariat set to update the online [poll](#) accordingly based on EHTF Bureau feedback.
14. The session also noted that the timing is appropriate to begin identifying a host for the EHTF meeting in 2027, with a call for expressions of interest to be launched in summer 2026.

15. To support preparations for the upcoming EHTF meeting, participants were invited to submit responses to [guiding questions](#) by 6 July 2026, including suggestions on engagement approaches, emerging topics and speakers, data collection methods, and proposals to help shape the direction towards the next Ministerial Conference.

Youth leadership transition in the EHTF Bureau

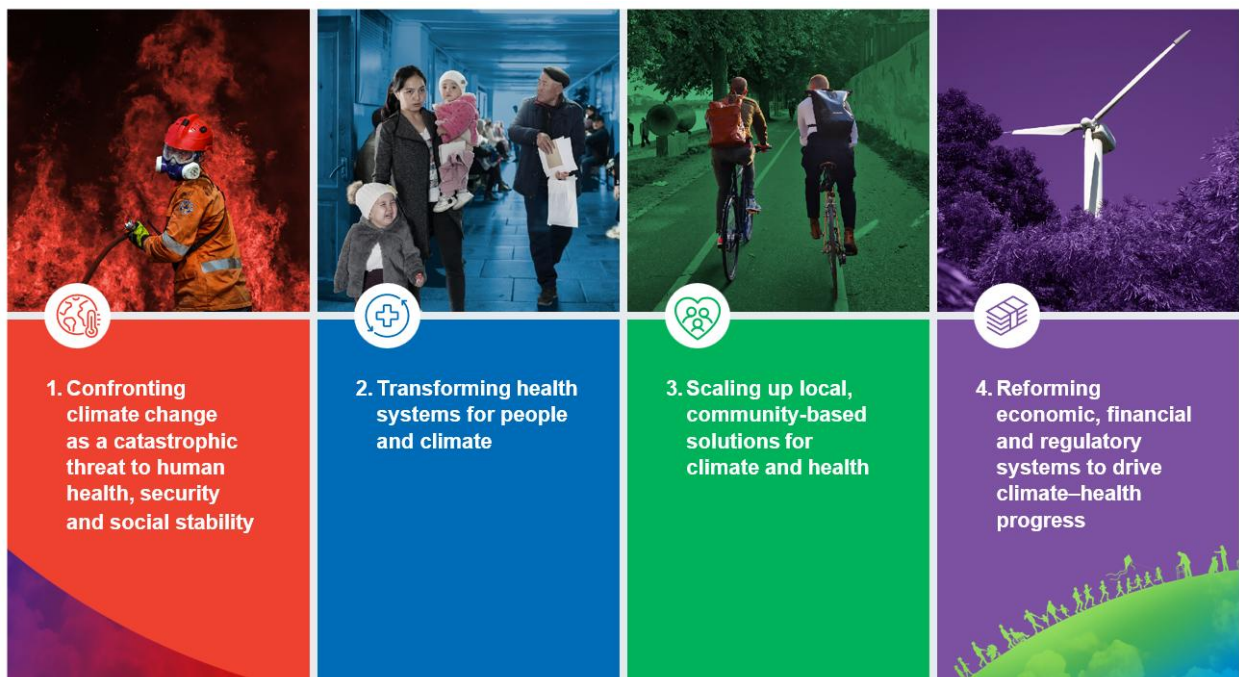


The European Environment and Health Youth Coalition representative, António Marques Pinto, introduced Rebecca Forner (Regional Director for Europe, International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA)) as the new youth representative in the EHTF Bureau. Rebecca is a sixth-year Austrian medical student with extensive advocacy experience in international cooperation. Passing the baton to the IFMSA representative, António emphasized: *“There is power in involving youth organisations early in the process as it creates ownership, broader participation, and helps identify new partnerships and resources”*.

4. Any other business

16. The meeting participants received an update on the newly launched [Call to Action of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#), developed through a two-year independent process and launched ahead of the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly in May 2026. Framed around four domains (climate change, health systems, community-based solutions, and economic, financial and regulatory systems (Figure 1)), the recommendations were recognized as highly complementary to the Budapest commitments and an opportunity to strengthen momentum for implementation.

Figure 1. Key thematic areas addressed by the recommendations



17. The EHP Secretariat also invited members to mark their calendars for the launch of the WHO Regional Office for Europe [Heat–Health Action Plans Guidance](#), taking place in Berlin on 11 June 2026. Coordinated by the Bonn office, this second edition is substantially expanded from the 2008 version and presents an updated Heat–Health Action Plan framework across eight core elements, highlighting key actions and decision points for planning, coordination, implementation, and continuous improvement.



5. Summary of decisions and next steps

18. Following Ireland’s announcement to host the next EHTF meeting in Maynooth on 24–26 November 2026, the EHP Secretariat will circulate a save-the-date message to the full EHTF.
19. Participants expressed agreement with the structure and content of the PoW of the EHTF. [Guiding questions](#) to further improve the Programme will remain open for feedback until 6 July 2026.
20. Support was expressed for the proposed topics for future Bonn Dialogues, including One Health, chemical pollution and disease prevention, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, exposome science and policy, and environmental public health surveillance. EHTF members were encouraged to engage with the Secretariat on future topics, leadership opportunities, speakers and priorities.
21. Participants contributed ideas to shape the format and engagement approaches for the next in-person EHTF meeting in Ireland, with emphasis on interactive exchanges and reflection on emerging priorities. Participants emphasized the importance of early agenda-setting for the next EHTF meeting and supported the use of an online poll to gather country perspectives on emerging priorities, helping to inform a potential concept note and facilitate timely cross-sectoral engagement.
22. Meeting participants were invited to further submit responses to [guiding questions](#) by 6 July 2026, including suggestions on engagement formats, speakers, emerging topics, and innovative approaches to data collection to support implementation of the Budapest commitments.
23. The six EHP Partnerships reported continued progress in their collaborative work, including expanding membership, advancing thematic activities, and strengthening engagement with countries and stakeholders, including youth.
24. EHTF members were encouraged to consult with national authorities regarding hosting or co-hosting future EHTF meetings, with a call for expressions of interest for the 2027 meeting host to be launched in summer 2026.

Annex 1. Provisional agenda

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|-------------|--|--|
| 10:00–10:15 | Session 1 | Opening and adoption of the agenda and programme |
| | <p><i>Participants will be welcomed by the Chair and the meeting organizers. During this session, the location of the next EHTF meeting will be announced, and the Bureau will be invited to adopt the agenda and programme of the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant documents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>/1 Provisional list of documents</i> <i>/2 Scope and purpose</i> <i>/3 Provisional agenda</i> <i>/4 Provisional programme</i> <i>/11 EHP Newsletter, January–March 2026</i> <i>/12 EHP Newsletter, October–December 2025</i> | |
| 10:15–11:00 | Session 2 | EHTF Programme of Work for 2026–2027 |
| | <p><i>The session will open with a short presentation of the draft Programme of Work by the EHP Secretariat, followed by discussion.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant document:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>/6 Draft EHTF Programme of Work for 2026-2027</i> <i>/7 Second European Programme of Work 2026–2030</i> <i>/8 Global Health Strategy for 2025–2028 - advancing equity and resilience in a turbulent world: fourteenth General Programme of Work</i> <i>/9 Summary report of the 15th EHTF Bureau meeting (virtual, 10 December 2025)</i> <i>/10 Highlights of the 15th EHTF meeting (virtual, 17 June 2025)</i> | |
| 11:00–11:05 | <i>Nature-inspired reset break</i> | |
| 11:05–11:45 | Session 3 | Preparations for the upcoming EHTF meeting |
| | <p><i>In this session, participants will discuss preferred formats and topics, potential speakers, and the collection of practices and insights related to the implementation of the Budapest commitments.</i></p> | |
| 11:45–12:00 | Session 4 | Any other business, summary of decisions and next steps |
| | <p><i>This session allows participants to raise any other business not covered in the formal agenda. The Chair, together with the meeting organizers, will summarize key decisions, outline next steps, and close the meeting.</i></p> | |

Annex 2. Materials shared in the meeting chat

Shared by the Member State:

- [8th International Conference on Youth Mental Health](#)

Shared by the EHP Secretariat:

- [Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health: Call to Action](#)
- [Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health: Call to Action - Progress measures dashboard](#)
- [Bonn Dialogue: breaking the cycle – putting menstrual hygiene at the centre of environment and health](#)
- [Online masterclass series on natural environments and health](#)

Shared by the EHP stakeholder:

- [Global Exposome Summit](#)