



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

EURO/EHTFB13

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Draft meeting highlights

Organizer

WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, acting in its role as Secretariat of the European Environment and Health Process (EHP), in support of the EHTF Chair and co-Chair.

Participants

72 participants from 34 Member States in the WHO European Region and 8 stakeholder representatives, including youth.

Overall scope

To plan activities and key milestones to be achieved by the [EHP](#) in the implementation of the commitments from the Budapest Declaration in 2025 and beyond. Also, to take stock of the progress made in 2024 in the follow-up to the [Budapest Conference](#), including updates from the [EHTF](#) and [EHP Partnerships](#).

Main agreements and next steps

- The Bureau members expressed their agreement with the proposed elements of the draft agenda for the upcoming EHTF meeting. They also decided to convene for a Bureau consultation in early 2025 to further discuss and refine the development of the EHTF agenda.
- The host country for the EHTF meeting has yet to be confirmed, and the EHP Secretariat has invited expressions of interest from EHTF members to host the meeting.
- In the spring of 2025, the EHP Secretariat will launch a call for expressions of interest to serve in the EHTF Bureau and will work on updating and expanding the list of EHP stakeholders.

Selected conclusions

- Political momentum on environment and health issues (particularly climate and health action) has been increasing, as reflected in the latest [Manifesto](#) of the Regional Director of the European Region of the WHO, which shapes the direction of the [second European Programme of Work \(EPW2\)](#).
- Countries are actively working toward implementing the Budapest commitments, demonstrating progress at the national level.
- The EHP Partnerships continue to expand and progress, with new members joining and key initiatives moving forward, strengthening regional cooperation on environment and health.
- Implementation of the Budapest commitments remains a key priority for the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, which is committed to supporting Member States and stakeholders in addressing it.

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1. Introduction

1. The highlights provide a summary of the key discussions and decisions made during the thirteenth EHTF Bureau meeting, which was held on 16 December 2025 through a virtual connection. The meeting focused on reviewing the progress of the European Environment and Health Process (EHP) in 2024 and planning for 2025. The highlights are organized by the main topics of the meeting sessions.
2. The meeting was organized by the World Health Organization European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO ECEH), acting in its role as Secretariat of the EHP, in support of the Chair and co-Chair.
3. The meeting was attended by members of the Bureau from Armenia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as by representatives of the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition (EEHYC), Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In addition, EHTF members from Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and representatives of the European Commission (EC), International Youth Health Organization, Regional Environmental Center (REC) former and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) joined the meeting. Also, alongside WHO ECEH experts, representatives from WHO Country Offices in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the meeting (Annex 1).

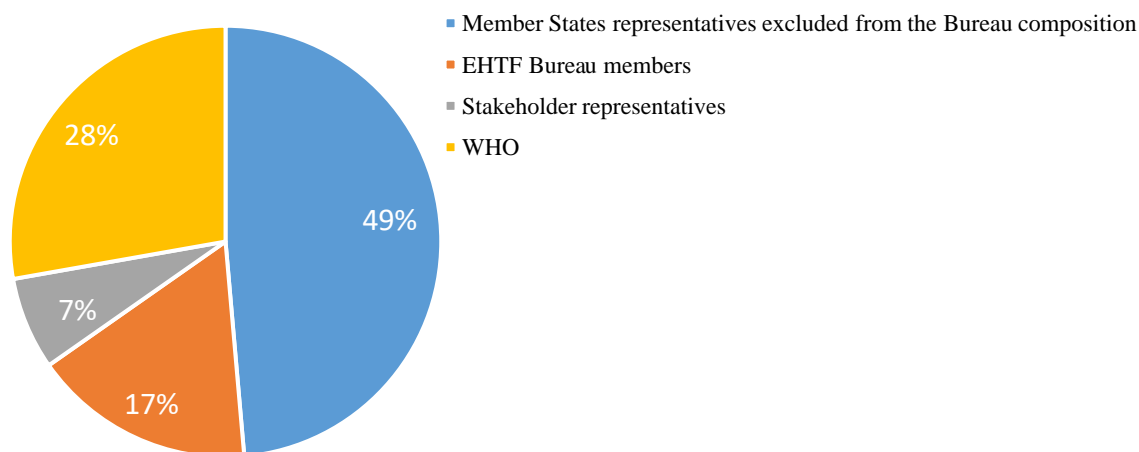


Figure 1. Distribution of 13th EHTF Bureau meeting participants by representation category

2. Opening and adoption of the agenda

4. The meeting began with an opening from Prof. Raquel Duarte-Davidson, the co-Chair of the Bureau, who welcomed the Bureau as well as other members of the EHTF attending the meeting. The Chair of the EHTF, Ms Brigit Staatsen, shared the chairing with Ms Duarte-Davidson.
5. The co-Chair was followed by Ms Francesca Racioppi, the Head of the WHO ECEH, who welcomed meeting participants and introduced the scope and purpose of the meeting, as well as the provisional programme (Annex 2).
6. Ms Racioppi also highlighted key takeaways from the [74th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe](#), where Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge was nominated by Member States for a second five-year term as WHO Regional Director for Europe. Key focus areas for EPW2 that emerge from research and ongoing dialogue with countries and partners in the European Region include:
 - tackling the surge of noncommunicable diseases and mental health issues;
 - addressing demographic shifts such as ageing and migration;
 - establishing health systems of the future;
 - managing the health impacts of climate change;
 - building health security.

As presented above, one of the priorities of Dr Kluge's [Manifesto](#) is the urgent need to address climate change, placing the environment and health agenda at the heart of regional policies. This marks a significant milestone for the EHP, as the upcoming EPW2 (2026–2030) will provide a structured framework for Member States to advance their environment and health commitments in line with the Budapest Declaration and its Roadmap.

7. Looking ahead, February 2025 will feature a [public hearing](#) on “Climate Change and Health: Shaping a Resilient Future”. In the following months, the Pan-European Commission on Climate Change and Health is expected to be launched, aimed at strengthening leadership and collaboration across the health and environment sectors.
8. The revised agenda and the provisional programme of the meeting were adopted.

3. On the road to implementing the Budapest commitments

9. Participants were presented with inspiring examples of how Budapest commitments are being implemented across the region (Table 1). Tangible progress was showcased through selected Member State initiatives mostly implemented after the latest [EHTF meeting](#) (26–27 June 2024 Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the)), illustrating how these commitments have been translated into action. The collection of country experiences was based on submissions from Member States and, in some cases, developed in collaboration with the WHO ECEH.

Table 1. *Overview of country activities presented by the Member State representatives*

Croatia	<p>Work on water safety plan auditing and climate change impacts on vector-borne diseases</p> <p>Croatia presented key outcomes from the Water Safety Plan (WSP) Auditing workshop (6–7 May 2024, Split), highlighting its success in using a participatory approach to secure political commitment at the national level. Organized by the Institute of Public Health and WHO ECEH under the Protocol on Water and Health, the workshop addressed critical health challenges linked to climate change and water pollution. Participants gained valuable knowledge and skills on developing and implementing national auditing schemes effectively. The meeting also fostered networking among Croatian, Hungarian and Italian experts to share experiences and best practices, and promoting peer-to-peer support as well as future collaboration on WSP auditing, reinforcing regional efforts to safeguard public health through improved water management.</p> <p>The country representative also informed participants about the outcomes of a meeting on the impacts of climate change on vector-borne diseases in Croatia, held on 14–15 October 2024 in Zagreb. Organized by the Institute of Public Health, WHO Country Office in Croatia, and WHO ECEH, the event built on a workshop on the implementation of the Budapest Declaration and its Roadmap, held in November 2023. Key takeaways included the importance of developing public health interventions to reduce disease burdens, promoting innovative research for surveillance and prevention, and advancing new tools for diagnosis and control. Strengthening climate-adaptive health systems was highlighted as a priority.</p>
Hungary	<p>Strategic approach to implementing the Budapest Declaration</p> <p>The strategic decision of Hungary on the implementation of the Budapest Declaration was to integrate commitments horizontally into existing strategies and policies, including the National Environmental Protection Program, the National Climate Change Program, and the National Sustainable Development Framework Strategy. These strategies are action-oriented, set clear targets with numerical indicators and deadlines, and extend beyond electoral cycles, ensuring long-term impact.</p> <p>A key priority is the reduction of preventable deaths and the promotion of healthier environments, focusing on air quality, urban health, and mental well-being. The National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy, in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Center on Environmental Health Risk Management, continues its work on indoor environments and children's health. A new cycle of the National Children's Respiratory Health Survey will be launched in 2025, covering approximately 70,000 third-grade children, providing data on environmental determinants of respiratory health.</p>
Israel	<p>Collaborative approach to addressing air pollution</p> <p>Israel's air pollution challenges are influenced by unique climatic conditions, its geographical location, high population density and proximity to industrial zones. As part of the ongoing efforts to address air pollution and its health impacts, the Ministry of Health in Israel introduced an Inter-ministerial Forum on Air Quality, aimed at fostering collaborative action across various ministries.</p> <p>The Forum's core operational focus is on enhancing information exchange between ministries and regulators. This collaborative effort, led by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environmental Protection, addresses critical issues such as residential areas near industrial zones, treatment facilities releasing harmful substances, and odors alongside air pollution. The solutions being developed are complex but essential for safeguarding public health.</p>

Lithuania	<p>Highlights on best practices for hand hygiene and menstrual health in schools</p> <p>On 5 September 2024, a conference on good practices in hand hygiene and menstrual health in schools was held in Kaunas, Lithuania. Organized by the National Public Health Centre under the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Lithuanian Sports University and WHO ECEH, the event took place within the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health.</p> <p>During the conference, Lithuania presented key findings from a survey on menstrual hygiene practices across the WHO European Region. The survey, involving countries like Moldova, North Macedonia, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Montenegro, highlighted the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration between schools, parents, communities, decision-makers and NGOs to improve menstrual hygiene management.</p> <p>The results showed that while menstrual hygiene is recognized in many schools, it still lacks sufficient attention and funding in some regions. Effective governance and legal frameworks supporting menstrual health in schools were identified as crucial. Though progress is slow, there is a growing commitment to provide menstrual health education, distribute menstrual products, and reduce stigma. The results emphasized the continued importance of promoting dignity and health for girls in schools.</p>
Uzbekistan	<p>Progress on chemical safety and Poison Center development</p> <p>Uzbekistan is making significant progress in establishing a robust national system for sound chemicals management and aligning its priorities with the Budapest Declaration. In June 2024, WHO CO in Uzbekistan organized a training on the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) for classification and labeling of chemicals. The four-day training, organized in cooperation with the WHO ECEH and United Nations Institute for Training and Research, brought together national experts from diverse sectors including health, environment, agriculture, emergency response and veterinary services. This event marked a key milestone in equipping Uzbekistan's first pool of GHS-trained experts, who are now pivotal in advancing chemical safety and building a legal framework for the country.</p> <p>Another important initiative in chemical safety is the establishment of a national Poison Center, aimed at improving toxicological services, chemical emergency response and poisonings prevention. Currently, a national assessment is underway, with a concept for the Poison Center set to be presented to policymakers. This work underscores the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and leadership to ensure public health remains a priority in chemical management.</p>

10. As part of the session, the EHP Secretariat and stakeholders provided updates on their recent activities (Table 2), outlining key developments, ongoing initiatives and future priorities. The table below presents a few examples of regional activities discussed during the session.

Table 2. Examples of regional activities presented by the EHP Secretariat and stakeholders' representatives

<p>Air quality</p>	<p>Report and briefs on the personal-level actions to reduce air pollution exposure in the WHO European Region: A comprehensive report has been developed to summarize evidence and provide practical guidance on reducing personal exposure to ambient air pollution in the WHO European Region. Based on this report, a collection of briefs distills complex considerations into clear, actionable recommendations. These include strategies for minimizing time in polluted outdoor environments, guidance on physical activity, the use of portable and central air cleaners, respirators, and face masks, as well as recommendations on active transportation, optimal travel routes, driving styles, and vehicle settings to mitigate exposure.</p> <p>Upcoming second Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health: The Conference (25–27 March 2025, Cartagena, Colombia) will highlight evidence-based, coordinated multi-sectoral solutions in cities, countries and regions to prevent communicable and noncommunicable disease, save lives, protect child health and limit climate change across the world. WHO Headquarters has issued a circular invitation letter to all Member States. WHO is developing a series of science-policy snapshots for the upcoming Conference, providing concise, evidence-based insights on key issues. One snapshot focuses on the regional perspective, drafted by WHO with feedback from members of the Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution. Additionally, WHO is actively engaged in work on transboundary cooperation, contributing to discussions on cross-border environmental and health challenges.</p> <p>Project on the Health Risks of Air Pollution in Europe–HRAPIE-2: WHO ECEH together with advisers and members of the systematic review team meets frequently to engage in discussion and reach consensus on the classification of concentration–response functions (CRFs) for health risk assessment, as well as the exposure ranges to which these CRFs would apply and other relevant information. Discussion outcomes will inform a forthcoming technical report, providing guidance on health impact assessments of air quality policies, incl. which concentration-response functions to use, applicable exposure ranges, background health data, and accounting for combined exposures to different air pollutants.</p>
<p>Chemical safety</p>	<p>Project on the elimination of mercury-containing medical devices: This project aims to develop and implement nationwide strategies to phase out the import, export, and manufacture of mercury-containing thermometers and sphygmomanometers. Key actions include transforming procurement and supply chains, promoting alternative devices, training medical staff, demonstrating phasing out of the devices, raising public awareness, and enhancing waste management practices. In the WHO European Region, Albania and Montenegro are participating in this project.</p>

Climate change and health

WHO Heat-Health Action Plan guidance: With support from the European Commission, WHO ECEH continues to update its Heat-Health Action Plan guidance, originally published in 2008. The updated version, expected to be published in spring 2026, will include eight actionable core elements, and updated public health advice. In November 2024, WHO ECEH convened an expert meeting with the lead authors of the guidance to review and refine the structure and technical content of the eight core element chapters.

The 11th meeting of the working group on Health in Climate Change (HIC) and REACH consultation: At the 11th annual HIC meeting on 29 October 2024, WHO ECEH shared updates on key developments, including regional reports, heat and health progress, the intersection of mental health and climate change, among other topics. A dedicated segment of the programme focused on a special consultation for identifying regional research priorities under the global Research Agenda for Action on Climate and Health ([REACH](#)).

Pan-European Commission on Climate Change and Health: WHO/Europe will host a high-level hearing “[Climate Change and Health: Shaping a Resilient Future](#)” in February 2025 to address regional challenges and guide future actions under the second European Programme of Work. Later in 2025, WHO/Europe plans to launch the independent commission will elevate the political profile of climate and health.

Transatlantic Dialogues: In 2024, WHO/Europe, the Pan American Health Organization, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the Transatlantic Initiative on Climate Change and Health, aimed at fostering collaboration through policy dialogues. As part of this initiative, two Transatlantic Dialogues have been convened. The first dialogue focused on [extreme heat and health](#) (virtual), and the second one addressed [health sector governance for climate action](#) (hybrid, organized as a part of a broader meeting hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection and the National Public Health Institute).

COP29 engagement: WHO made a significant impact at COP29, promoting health as the argument for climate action. WHO had a dedicated Health Pavilion showcasing evidence and solutions to link health and climate action, featuring a two-week programme. A highlight was the launch of the COP29 “[Special Report on Climate Change and Health: Health is the Argument for Climate Action](#)”. WHO ECEH actively engaged at COP29 by co-organizing two events – one on extreme heat and one sustainable cities – and by participating in the high-level roundtable on One Health. The office also engaged in several other events led by Spain (on the Protocol on Water and Health), Italy (on nature-based solutions), Kyrgyzstan (on the mountain, climate and health agenda) and Canada (on heat health).

Environmentally sustainable health systems	<p>Collection of mental health interventions in the face of a changing climate: WHO ECEH started the collection of initiatives to identify and compile case studies of interventions designed to protect and promote mental health in the face of climate change. This effort shines a light on innovative approaches from across the WHO European Region that address the growing mental health challenges linked to climate impacts. The mapping of case studies will help to document activities already underway in the WHO European Region, to identify current gaps, and to promote further action. This information will feed into a planned WHO policy brief on mental health and climate change. Meeting participants were invited to submit case studies and to disseminate the call within their professional networks.</p> <p>Overview on safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities: The report provides an overview and definitions of safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities; lists concrete guidance on actions that can be taken to achieve them; and directs readers to key materials, resources and tools for detailed guidance and actions.</p> <p>Workshops on environmental sustainability in hospital management in Romania: WHO ECEH supported the organization of two workshops (24–25 October 2024), contributing to the development and delivery of content focused on promoting sustainable and climate-resilient healthcare. The first workshop aimed to equip National Institute for Health Services Management (INMSS) trainers with the necessary skills to promote sustainability within healthcare settings. The second workshop provided practical insights from hospital managers in the Netherlands, Norway, and Portugal, sharing their experiences in implementing sustainable practices in hospital operations. The events were co-organized by the WHO Country Office in Romania, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the INMSS, and the NOVA School of Public Health (Portugal).</p>
Environmental noise	<p>Report on disability weights for noise-related health states in the WHO European Region: The “European noise disability weights measurement study”, on which this report is based, aimed to derive disability weights for several environmental and non-environmental noise related health states using standardized and comparable methods. A nationally representative sample survey was administered in the general populations of four countries – Hungary, Italy, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and Sweden. This report is building on expert work from the 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines.</p>
Nature and health	<p>Nature and health course: A four-week curriculum on nature and health is being developed for the Bonn School for Environment and Health. The course, to be launched in the last quarter of 2025, will cover ecosystem services, nature-based solutions, One Health, and the relevance of nature to both environment and health ministries.</p> <p>Upcoming report on nature-based solutions and health: WHO ECEH will launch a new report on nature-based solutions and health on 22 May 2025, aligning with the International Day of Biological Diversity and the Budapest Conference objectives. Member States were invited to express interest if they wish to lead this event.</p>

Environment and health inequality	A fact sheet on air quality is under review, with future releases planned on injuries and climate change. A regional report on climate change and inequality is set for 2025.
One Health	One Health approach implementation: The Adaptation Guide on the One Health Approach was launched at the 74th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe , summarizing key regional and global progress. In November 2024, the Quadripartite (WHO, FAO, UNEP, WOA) renewed its commitment to regional One Health implementation.
Professional profiles	Upcoming professional profiles report: WHO ECEH is analyzing environmental sector changes over 25 years and defining necessary competencies and skills, with completion expected by end of 2025.
Safe active mobility	<p>The 8th Bonn Dialogue on Environment and Health: WHO ECEH, in partnership with the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), convened ministers, deputy ministers, state secretaries, European Commission representatives and high-level stakeholders from cities, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations and youth activists at the 8th Bonn Dialogue. Participants discussed the urgent need for proactive implementation actions to integrate active mobility – walking and cycling – into transport policies, spatial planning and urban design, and health and climate strategies. The Dialogue concluded with the key takeaway messages for policy-makers and stakeholders to intensify promotion of active mobility in the WHO European Region and accelerate the implementation of agreements, strategies and plans for cycling and walking.</p> <p>For more activities, please see the paragraphs 11–13 that outline further work implemented in partnership with THE PEP.</p>
Sustainable Development Goals	Budapest Declaration and SDG indicators: The work is progressing on identifying more than 60 indicators for Budapest Declaration implementation, categorized into five thematic chapters: environmental pollution, climate change, nature, environmental services and built environment, and the governance and multilateral collaboration. A consultation process will begin in 2025 to refine and select indicators before the next Ministerial Conference.

Water, sanitation and hygiene	<p>Regional workshop and Task Force meeting in Budapest: In December 2024, two major events were held under the Protocol on Water and Health: the Regional Workshop on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation and the Task Force Meeting on Target Setting and Reporting. During the workshop, the Equitable Access Scorecard 2.0 was launched, emphasizing the need to accelerate progress toward universal access to water and sanitation. The task force meeting marked the start of the sixth Protocol reporting cycle, reflecting on past achievements and gathering input for the Protocol programme of work for 2026–2028.</p> <p>New publications and data collection efforts: In the context of the Protocol, WHO/Europe and UNECE recently published the report Strengthening climate resilience in the drinking-water and sanitation sector, highlighting strategies to build resilience in water and sanitation systems.</p> <p>At the same time, two key data validation processes are in progress, supported by WHO ECEH. The first focuses on SDG indicators 6.a and 6.b, collected through the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) mechanism, assessing governance, financing, and climate resilience in WASH systems. The second involves the 2025 WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme estimates, with national consultations underway to update data on WASH services in households (SDG 6.1.1, 6.2.1) and safely treated wastewater (SDG 6.3.1).</p> <p>Support for WASH in healthcare facilities: WHO ECEH continues to assist countries in strengthening WASH in healthcare facilities through the Practical Steps Tracker, a tool that monitors progress toward a sustainable WASH environment. This initiative also serves as a reporting mechanism for the UN General Assembly resolution on “Sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste, and electricity services in health-care facilities”.</p> <p>Enhancing water and sanitation resilience in Ukraine and preparing for regional initiatives: In response to the ongoing war, WHO remains engaged in supporting Ukraine’s water and health sectors preparedness, including through a national consultation on water safety planning (12-13 March 2025).</p> <p>Preparations are underway for key regional events: two sub-regional workshops in Astana on safely managed sanitation and wastewater and environmental surveillance respectively, a regional meeting on WASH in health care facilities in Budapest (July 2025), and in-country training sessions on climate-resilient water and sanitation services using risk-based tools such as water and sanitation safety plans.</p>
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11. The UNECE representative informed that during the [22nd session of the Steering Committee of THE PEP](#) (28–30 October 2024, Geneva, Switzerland), over 20 Member States convened to strengthen collaboration on sustainable mobility and health. Organized jointly by WHO/Europe and UNECE, the session marked significant milestones, including the adoption of the first-ever [Pan-European Master Plan on Walking](#), a comprehensive [strategy on transport, health and environment for the pan-European region](#), and an inspirational [document on sustainable tourism mobility](#) (please see Annex 3 to learn more about these documents. In addition, a new WHO publication was launched: “[Health economic assessment tool \(HEAT\) for walking and cycling. Methods and user guide on physical activity, air pollution, road fatalities and carbon impact assessments: 2024 update](#)”.

12. THE PEP Partnership on Child- and Youth-friendly Mobility is preparing a document for adoption in 2025, focusing on creating transportation systems that prioritize the needs of children and young people. It aims to ensure that their voices are heard in urban planning and mobility design, contributing to safer, more supportive environments for their development.
13. The UN-Habitat representative informed the meeting about the recent [World Urban Forum](#) held in Cairo, Egypt, in early November, which saw over 25,000 participants from 182 countries. There were 12 dedicated events focused on health, led by partners including WHO. The Forum produced a [call to action](#), which includes key areas for advancing urban health in alignment with the Budapest Declaration.
14. The UNEP representative highlighted the convergence of three major COPs that took place in the final months of 2024: Biodiversity COP16, Climate COP29, and Desertification COP16. These events addressed key environmental issues with direct implications for health and sustainable development. The representative emphasized that these COP outcomes are highly relevant to strengthening national environment and health portfolios, offering a pathway to enhance sustainable solutions, climate resilience and One Health policies regionally and globally.
15. The European Environment and Health Youth Coalition representative emphasized the critical role of young people in advancing the implementation of the Budapest Commitment, highlighting their dual role as advocates and implementers of policies. Notable examples of youth-led initiatives include advocacy campaigns, capacity-building programmes, and the development of child- and youth-friendly policies. Looking ahead, the youth representative urged Member States to further strengthen their commitment to youth empowerment by providing opportunities for meaningful participation.

4. EHP Partnerships: key updates and developments

16. Participants were updated on the recent developments of the EHP Partnerships by the lead countries (Table 3).

Table 3. Overview of activities implemented by the EHP Partnerships

Health Sector Climate Action	<p>Recent activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the Partnership to Germany, Hungary, Israel and North Macedonia. • Terms of Reference were developed to guide Partnership's operations. • Strategic meetings were held in Bonn (May 2024) and Dublin (September 2024). The meeting focused on innovative strategies for decarbonizing transport within the health-care sector, with participants exchanging insights and initiatives to drive emissions reductions. • The EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action hosted its first Deep-Dive Solutions Exchange on Climate-Friendly Transport (5 November 2024), drawing over 100 participants from 35 countries. <p>Priorities for 2025:</p> <p>The Partnership continues to focus on its core mission through Deep Dives, with upcoming ones on Sub-national Health Sector Adaptation (April 2025), and Greener Models of Healthcare (November 2025).</p>
Human Biomonitoring	<p>Recent activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the EHTF meeting in Utrecht, two more countries—Ireland and Czechia—have joined the Partnership, bringing the total number of partners to 21. • Over the summer, the programme of work was finalized, and three working groups were established: communication, initiating HBM studies, and interpreting HBM results. • New publication on activities to facilitate national HBM programmes is available here. <p>Priorities for 2025:</p> <p>Key upcoming activities include the second annual meeting in February 2025, in Belgrade, Serbia, where members will take stock in the progress of work, discuss the next steps in the implementation of the work programme, with the third annual meeting tentatively set for end of 2025.</p>
Poisons Centres	<p>Recent activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership held its kickoff meeting in June 2024 in Istanbul, where the terms of reference and potential work areas were discussed. • Currently, 16 countries have expressed interest in joining, with six (Türkiye, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Malta, Spain, and Austria) already formal members, alongside the European Association of Poison Centers and Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT).

	<p>Priorities for 2025:</p> <p>An online meeting in early 2025 will further refine the terms of reference, and an in-person session is planned at the EAPCCT Congress in Glasgow in May 2025 to strengthen collaboration.</p>
Risk Reduction in the School Environment	<p>Recent activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first online meeting of the Partnership was hosted by the National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy in November 2024. Participants included Belarus, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, and Montenegro, while Georgia and Moldova provided written input due to other obligations. During the meeting, partners shared national strategies, activities, legal frameworks, and responsible institutions, setting the foundation for future collaboration and action. • Since the latest EHTF meeting, the Partnership has welcomed four new members: Belarus, Georgia, Luxembourg and Montenegro. <p>Priorities for 2025:</p> <p>Key priorities include organizing an in-person workshop in the spring 2025, facilitating knowledge exchange via TEAMS SharePoint, and expanding the Partnership to new members.</p>
Youth	<p>Recent activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2nd International Youth Climate Summit, held on 6–7 December 2024 in Portorož, Slovenia, provided a platform for young leaders to shape a collective declaration on global climate action, exchange ideas, and advocate for climate and environmental health solutions. • Following the Summit, the climate action hackathon, held on 7–8 December 2024 in Portorož, brought together youth teams to develop innovative, real-world solutions to climate challenges. The event fostered mentorship-driven collaboration, encouraged creative problem-solving, and strengthened international connections among young people working on climate action. • Interest in the EHP Partnership on Youth continues to grow, with four organizations and three Member States expressing their willingness to join (process ongoing). The form for submissions of expressions of interest is available here. <p>Priorities for 2025:</p> <p>The Partnership will focus on expanding youth engagement and membership, launching a campaign in early 2025 to attract new participants. Additionally, a planning meeting will be organized to design activities for 2025–2026, fostering collaboration and capacity building among members.</p>
Healthy Active Mobility	<p>Recent activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latest Partnership meeting took place in Ulm, Germany in November 2024. • The new project initiative Active2Public Transport aims to enhance the connection between active mobility and public transport in the Danube region. This initiative will focus on integrating walking and cycling with public transit systems, promoting sustainable and seamless mobility solutions.

Priorities for 2025:

The upcoming work includes organizing a webinar to disseminate guidance from the Pan-European Master Plan on Walking and holding partner meetings in selected countries, with deep dives in Rotterdam (March 2025) and Tirana (October 2025, *to be confirmed*). Efforts will focus on collaborating with UNEP on the Pan-African Action Plan for Active Mobility, partnering with financial institutions like the World Bank, for funding, and engaging with the public transport sector, including participation in the [UITP Summit](#) in Hamburg. Additionally, progress will be tracked in implementing actions across the pan-European region, following the model of the Master Plan for Cycling Promotion.

17. In 2024, the EHP Secretariat supported the Partnerships work. This included the creation of virtual workspaces to serve as an internal platform for exchange and cooperation for each EHP Partnership, along with an EHP Secretariat's co-working space containing joint documents and useful resources. To enhance visibility, Partnership-specific banners were developed, and the promotional leaflets about the EHP Partnerships were updated as of November 2024. Additionally, a [web story](#) was published about the launch of two new EHP Partnerships focused on Poison Centers and Risk Reduction in the School Environment. In 2025, a comprehensive communication report on Partnerships' work is set to be finalized ahead of the next EHTF meeting. Key priorities also include updating promotional materials, developing new communication assets such as videos and posters (subject to available resources), and enhancing Partnership-specific web pages on the WHO website to ensure clear, consistent and effective engagement with stakeholders.

5. Accelerating the implementation of the Programme of Work of the EHTF in 2025

18. During this session, the Secretariat conducted a poll to learn from participants how they see their institutions and countries benefiting from the EHTF in enhancing the implementation of the Budapest commitments.
19. The responses highlighted key areas of support, including political commitment, financial assistance, and raising awareness among stakeholders, particularly policymakers and youth. Many emphasized the value of experience sharing, policy dialogues, and technical assistance, especially in areas such as climate change, air quality, and chemicals management. There were also calls for practical tools, capacity building, and methodological support to strengthen national and subregional actions.
20. Additionally, respondents stressed the need for improved communication and engagement strategies, including better cross-ministerial coordination, social media campaigns, and targeted visits to successful projects. The importance of youth involvement, NGO support, and financial justifications for environmental health investments was also highlighted as critical to advancing the Budapest commitments.
21. The EHP Secretariat's communications representative updated the group on various multimedia initiatives launched in 2024 to support the EHP work. Key efforts included creating engaging video content, photo galleries, and social media posts, particularly targeting youth. Ongoing communication products include flyer on Budapest

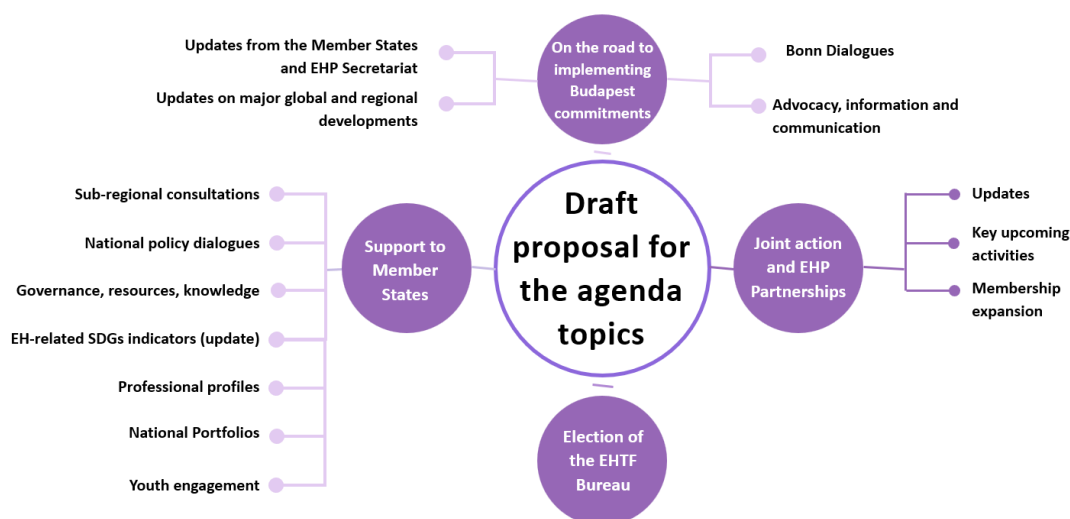
commitments, web stories, and the upcoming “[Let’s get moving! 100 reasons to walk and cycle more](#)” campaign.

22. In addition to these, the Secretariat emphasized the importance of national and local events documentation, to capture dynamic moments through smartphones and short interviews, which could later on be used, e.g. for the EHP Newsletter. To enhance visibility, EHP Secretariat encouraged participants leveraging social media, infographics and catchy taglines, with a focus on human interest stories.

6. Preparation for the fifteenth meeting of the EHTF

23. EHP Secretariat presented the draft outline of the meeting agenda (ref. Presentation “S5 - EHTF meeting agenda - EHP Secretariat”). Key agenda items include a follow-up on the Budapest Conference, including the Bonn Dialogues; updates on EHP Partnerships; support for Member States through policy dialogues, efforts to strengthen governance, leadership and knowledge-sharing, and implementation of national portfolios; as well as the election of the EHTF Bureau (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Initial outline of key discussion elements for the EHTF meeting agenda



24. The Bureau members supported the proposed agenda elements for the upcoming EHTF meeting and planned to hold a follow-up consultation in early 2025 to further shape its structure and content. The EHP Secretariat has invited EHTF members to submit expressions of interest in hosting the EHTF meeting.

7. Strengthening governance, intersectoral collaboration and knowledge for health and environment

25. The Bureau was briefed on the outcomes of the Executive Officers Meeting on Governance and Capacities for Environment and Health (2–4 December 2024, Bonn, Germany). The meeting provided a dynamic regional platform for peer exchange, fostering collaboration,

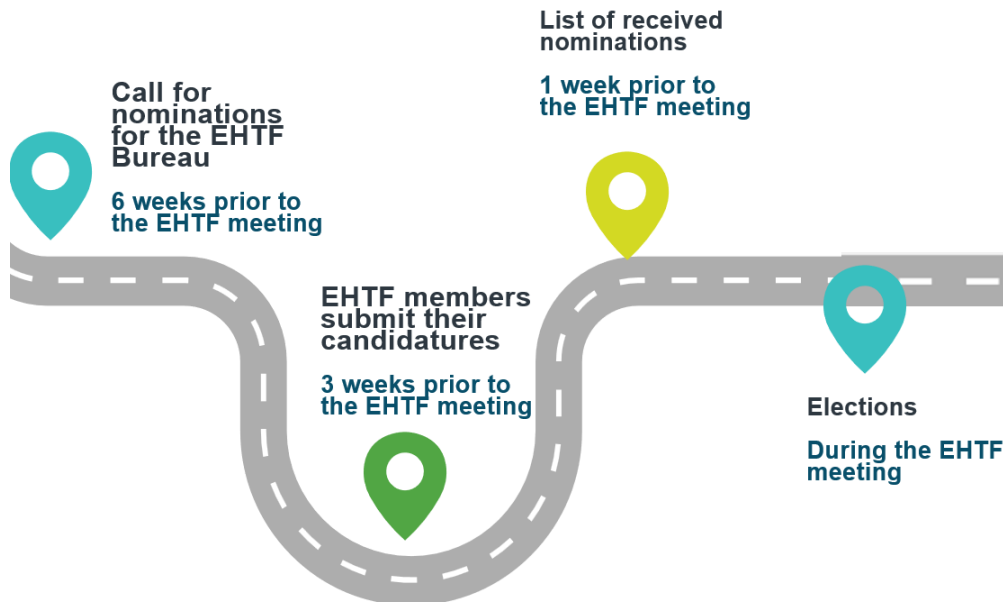
innovative solutions and long-term networks to accelerate forward the Budapest commitments implementation.

26. The meeting brought together representatives from 28 countries, with 48 foreign nominees in attendance. Approximately 25% of participants were from Ministries of Environment, while 75% represented Ministries of Health. UNEP and UNECE actively contributed to the discussions, along with expert speakers from the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region, International Association of National Public Health Institutes, the European Investment Bank and various research institutions and government bodies. Their contributions provided valuable insights, reinforcing the importance of a collaborative and cross-sectoral approach in addressing governance and capacity.
27. Supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection, the meeting focused on advancing policy implementation in response to the triple crisis (climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss) while addressing governance, resources, communication and knowledge-sharing. Discussions explored:
 - Governance and leadership: Strengthening institutional structures, intersectoral collaboration, and policy integration.
 - Resources: Enhancing workforce competencies, financial strategies and investment opportunities.
 - Knowledge transfer, communication and advocacy: Translating research into policy, improving strategic communication and tackling misinformation.
28. To support discussions, WHO ECEH developed seven background documents, along with a briefing note summarizing these materials. This comprehensive package was shared with all meeting participants as well as with the EHTF, ensuring broad access to the key insights and evidence needed for informed decision-making. A summary of key messages and case studies will be published in 2025.
29. This meeting marked a significant step toward strengthening governance and capacities for environment and health, reinforcing the need for sustained collaboration and innovative approaches in tackling regional challenges.

8. Update on the forthcoming Bureau elections

30. The EHP Secretariat provided an update on the forthcoming Bureau elections according to the [EHTF Rules of Procedure](#). The Bureau composition to be elected at the upcoming EHTF meeting is expected to consist of 8–14 Member States, including the Chair, Co-Chair, and immediate past Chair; EHP recognized stakeholders (UNECE, UNEP and 2 other stakeholders); and representative from youth organizations.
31. Meeting participants were reminded that Bureau elections are held every two years. Current members may seek re-election, and the process will consider the balance between the environment and health sectors, as well as geographical and gender representation.
32. The call for nominations for the EHTF Bureau will be sent no later than six weeks before the meeting, with an invitation to submit candidatures three weeks in advance (Figure 2). The list of nominations received will be shared with the EHTF one week prior to the meeting.

Figure 2. *EHTF Bureau elections timeline*



9. Summary of decisions and next steps

33. The Bureau members expressed their agreement with the proposed elements of the draft agenda for the upcoming EHTF meeting. They also decided to convene for a Bureau consultation in early 2025 to further discuss and refine the development of the EHTF agenda.
34. The host country for the EHTF meeting has yet to be confirmed, and the EHP Secretariat has invited expressions of interest from EHTF members to host the meeting.
35. In the spring of 2025, the EHP Secretariat will launch a call for expressions of interest to serve in the EHTF Bureau and will work on updating and expanding the list of EHP stakeholders.
36. The Chair closed the meeting, thanking participants for their active participation and valuable contributions, and the Secretariat for the meticulous preparation of the meeting.

Annex 1. List of participants

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Annex 2. Provisional programme

10:00–10:10	Session 1 – Opening, adoption of the agenda
<i>The Bureau is invited to adopt the agenda and the programme of the meeting.</i>	
<u>Relevant documents:</u>	
EURO/EHTFB13/1 List of documents	
EURO/EHTFB13/2 Scope and purpose	
EURO/EHTFB13/3 Provisional agenda	
EURO/EHTFB13/4 Provisional programme	
10:10–11:00	Session 2 – On the road to implementing the Budapest commitments: progress, opportunities and lessons learned
<i>Participants will be provided with examples of the implementation of the Budapest commitments by Member States, stakeholders, and EHP Secretariat in an interview format.</i>	
<u>Relevant documents:</u>	
EURO/EHTFB13/6 Programme of work for the EHTF for 2024–2025	
EURO/EHTFB13/7 Draft report of the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF (Utrecht, 26–27 June 2024)	
EURO/EHTFB13/8 EHP Newsletter , April–June 2024	
11:00–11:15	Break
11:15–12:00	Session 3 – EHP Partnerships: key updates and developments
<i>EHTF Bureau will be updated on the recent developments of the EHP Partnerships by the lead countries, organizations and EHP Secretariat.</i>	
<u>Relevant document:</u>	
EURO/EHTFB13/9 Promotional leaflets on the EHP Partnerships	
12:00–12:20	Session 4 – Ideastorm: Opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Work for the EHTF in 2025
<i>This session focuses on generating actionable insights to support the EHTF in advancing the implementation of its Programme of Work by strengthening governance, partnerships, optimizing resources and enhancing knowledge and tools for the Budapest commitments implementation.</i>	
12:20–12:35	Session 5 – Preparation for the fifteenth meeting of the EHTF
<i>In this session aimed at preparing for the next EHTF meeting, the EHTF Bureau will discuss provisional proposals for the host country, agenda and sessions' structure.</i>	
12:35–12:50	Session 6 – Strengthening governance, intersectoral collaboration, and knowledge for health and environment
<i>Meeting participants will be informed on the main outcomes of the Executive Officers Meeting on Governance and Capacities for Environment and Health (2–4 December 2024, Bonn, Germany).</i>	
12:50–12:55	Session 7 – Update on the forthcoming Bureau elections according to the EHTF Rules of Procedure
<i>In this session, the EHP Secretariat will provide information about the upcoming elections for the EHTF Bureau's next term.</i>	
<u>Relevant document:</u>	
EURO/EHTFB13/10 EHTF Rules of Procedure	
12:55–13:00	Session 8 – Any other business, summary of decisions, next steps and closure of meeting

Annex 3. Materials shared in the chat

The materials, shared by meeting participants, have been extracted from the chat and are listed below.

Publications

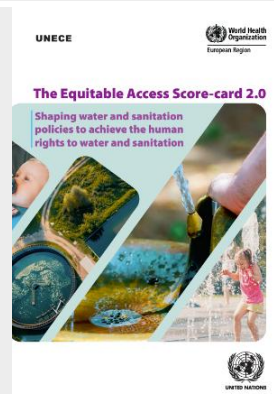


Personal-level actions to reduce air pollution exposure in the WHO European Region

This [report](#) summarizes evidence and information and formulates practical advice on personal-level actions to reduce exposure to ambient air pollution. It covers personal actions such as reducing the amount of time spent in polluted outdoor environments, adjusting the location and timing of physical activity, using air cleaners, wearing face coverings, and mobility options (transport, active transportation, routes, driving style and vehicle settings).

Disability weights for noise-related health states in the WHO European Region

The “European noise disability weights measurement study”, on which this [report](#) is based, aimed to derive disability weights for several environmental and non-environmental noise related health states using standardized and comparable methods. A nationally representative sample survey was administered in the general populations of four countries – Hungary, Italy, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and Sweden.



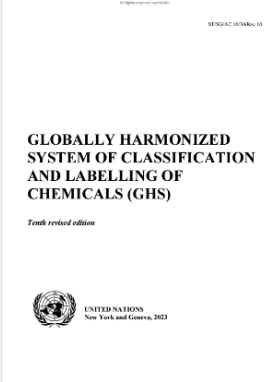
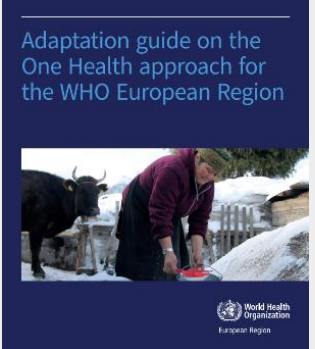


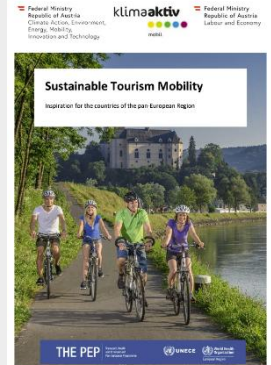
The Equitable Access Score-card 2.0 Shaping water and sanitation policies to achieve the human rights to water and sanitation

The Equitable Access Score-card 2.0, featured in this [publication](#), is an analytical tool designed to help governments and other stakeholders establish a baseline measure of the equity of access to water and sanitation, identify related priorities, evaluate progress through a process of self-assessment, and discuss further actions to be taken. The publication contains recommendations on planning the self-assessment and concrete examples of the benefits of using the Score-card 2.0 in different settings.

Strengthening climate resilience in the drinking-water and sanitation sector through the Protocol on Water and Health

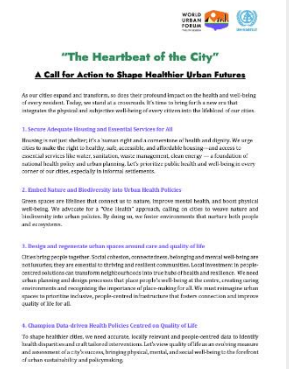
This [report](#) aims to support climate work under the [Protocol on Water and Health](#), providing strategic insight into its potential role in addressing the climate crisis, including through supporting development of targets and action plans at the national and subnational levels. This report explores key considerations for water and sanitation providers and regulators in addressing resilience and net zero, outlines actionable options and climate-related links, and identifies future opportunities under the Protocol.



	<h3>Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals</h3> <p>The tenth revised edition of the GHS includes updates on the classification procedure for desensitized explosives; the adoption of non-animal testing methods for classifying health hazards, particularly skin corrosion/irritation, serious eye damage/irritation, and respiratory or skin sensitization; enhanced precautionary statements to improve user comprehension while supporting practical labeling; and a review of annexes 9 and 10 to align classification strategies, guidance, and tools for metals and metal compounds with long-term aquatic toxicity provisions.</p>
<h3>Adaptation guide on the One Health approach for the WHO European Region</h3> <p>This guide underscores the critical need for collaborative efforts and innovative, people-centred and evidence-informed approaches to address complex health challenges comprehensively and effectively. These actions should not only address immediate concerns but also aim to bring about long-lasting, fundamental and positive transformations in how health challenges are understood, managed and prevented.</p>	
	<h3>Key takeaway messages from the Eighth Bonn Dialogue on Environment and Health</h3> <p>The key takeaways from the Dialogue on Safe Active Mobility provide policy-makers and stakeholders with valuable insights to further promote active mobility across the European Region. They aim to accelerate the implementation of agreements, strategies, and plans for cycling and walking.</p>
<h3>Manifesto for the post of Regional Director of the European Region of the World Health Organization 2025-2030</h3> <p>This publication presents a vision statement shaped by the questions raised during and after my hearing at the virtual forum with the Regional Evaluation Group and all WHO European Member States on 19 June 2024, as part of the Regional Director nomination process.</p>	
	<h3>Sustainable tourism mobility: Inspiration for the countries of the pan-European Region</h3> <p>This document provides practical insights and recommendations for fostering sustainable mobility behavior in response to contemporary challenges. Unlike existing manuals or toolboxes, this guidance targets responsible national authorities from the tourism and transport sectors.</p>

“The Heartbeat of the City” – A UN-Habitat call for action to shape healthier urban futures

The [document](#), presented at the World Urban Forum (4–8 November 2024, Cairo, Egypt) outlines a transformative vision for healthier, more inclusive cities by prioritizing housing as a human right, integrating nature and biodiversity into urban planning, fostering community well-being through people-centered design, and championing data-driven health policies.



Policy documents

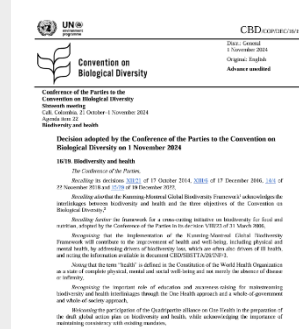
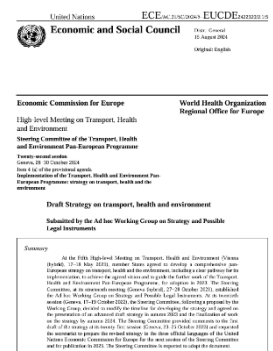


Pan-European Master Plan on Walking

This document introduces the first-ever pan-European Master Plan on Walking, adopted by the THE PEP Steering Committee during its 22nd session (28–30 October 2024). Rooted in the Vienna Declaration, the Master Plan emphasizes walking as a priority in mobility policies due to its wide-ranging benefits for health, the environment, local economies, and social inclusiveness.

Pan-European Strategy on Transport, Health and Environment

The [strategy](#), adopted at the 22nd session of the Steering Committee of the THE PEP, lays out a road map for the transformation of transport systems by 2050, promoting sustainable urban mobility, cleaner technologies and climate resilience.



Decision adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

By this [decision](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention of the Biodiversity, adopted the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, available in annex I of this decision, as a voluntary plan for supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Newsletters

Subscribe to the **HEAL newsletter** mailing list [here](#).

Send an email to receive the **EHP Newsletter** at euceh@who.int, or by clicking on the button [on this page](#).