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| World Health Organization  **Regional Office for Europe**  Weltgesundheitsorganisation  **Regionalbüro füR Europa** |  | Organisation Mondiale de la SantÉ  **Bureau RÉgional de l'Europe**  ВсемирнаЯ организациЯ здравоохранениЯ  **Европейское региональное бюро** |
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| **Twelfth meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) Bureau** | **EURO/EHTFB12** |
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| **Virtual** | **18 June 2024** |
| **22 April 2024** | **Original: English** |

**Draft summary report**

**Main highlights**

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| **Date** | 22 April 2024, virtual. |
| **Organizer** | WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, acting in its role as Secretariat of the European Environment and Health Process (EHP). |
| **Participants** | 62 participants from 39 Member States in the WHO European Region and 6 stakeholder representatives. |
| **Overall scope** | To prepare the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF and discuss progress attained to-date in the follow-up to the Budapest Conference, as well as the activities and key milestones to be achieved by the EHP in the implementation of the commitments from the Budapest Declaration in the 2024−2025 biennium and beyond. |
| **Main agreements and next steps** | Bureau members endorsed the proposed overall structure and content of the draft Programme of Work (PoW) for the EHTF, the agenda for the fourteenth EHTF meeting and the information note on the Bonn Dialogues.  The upcoming steps leading to the next EHTF meeting on 26−27 June 2024 in Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) are the following:   * consultation for written feedback from the Bureau on the documents and proposals for the format of the EHTF meeting sessions remains open until 7 May 2024. Following this, the EHP Secretariat will incorporate received feedback into the draft PoW for the EHTF, the agenda for the 14th meeting, and the information note on the Bonn Dialogues, which will be shared for further consultation with the EHTF; * EHP Secretariat will initiate a call for expressions of interest to serve in the EHTF Bureau, with the deadline for submissions set for 5 June 2024. |

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| 1. Introduction |

1. The EHTF Bureau held its twelfth meeting on 22 April through a virtual connection.
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.
3. The main objective of the meeting was to prepare the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF (26−27 June 2024, Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the)) and discuss progress attained to-date in the follow-up to the Budapest Conference, as well as the activities and key milestones to be achieved by the EHP in the implementation of the commitments from the Budapest Declaration in the 2024−2025 biennium and beyond.
4. The meeting was attended by members of the Bureau from Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, 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) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In addition, EHTF members from Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and representatives of the European Commission (EC), International Youth Health Organization and Regional Environmental Center (REC) former joined the meeting (Annex 1).

2. Opening, adoption of the agenda

1. Ms Raquel Duarte-Davidson, the co-Chair of the Bureau, opened the meeting and welcomed 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.
2. 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).
3. The objectives of the meeting included following up on Budapest commitments implementation, reviewing and providing input to the draft PoW for the EHTF for 2024–2025 and the draft agenda of the EHTF meeting. Discussions also focused on recent developments of the EHP Partnerships, the topics for the Bonn Dialogues, updates on the Bureau’s composition and the upcoming election of the co-Chair position from the environment sector, and suggestions on youth involvement and activities for the EHTF meeting.
4. The revised agenda and the provisional programme of the meeting were adopted.

3. Follow-up to the Budapest Conference: where are we?

1. Participants were provided with inspiring examples of the Budapest commitments implementation collected from the Member States and stakeholders (*ref. Presentation “Session 2 – Follow-up to the Budapest Conference”*). The session commenced with a retrospective view of the Budapest Conference, revisiting the commitments set during that momentous occasion. Following this, tangible progress was highlighted through the showcase of examples from Member States (Table 1), briefly illustrating how these commitments have been translated into action up to the present day. The collection of experiences presents updates delivered by country representatives and information retrieved from the quarterly EHP Newsletters.

*Table 1. Overview of country activities presented by the co-Chair during the Bureau meeting*

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| Prioritizing action to tackle the most pressing health challenges related to climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss | |
| Belgium | **Launch of the third National Action Plan on Environment and Health**  In 2024, Belgium launched the [third National Action Plan on Environment and Health](https://www.leefmilieu-gezondheid.be/nl/nieuws/officiele-lancering-van-nehap3-een-nieuwe-fase-voor-milieugezondheid-belgie) (NEHAP3), marking a significant milestone in its efforts to enhance resilience and sustainability. NEHAP3 focuses on adapting to climate change and reducing the harmful effects of chemicals on health and the environment. It includes eight specific actions such as transitioning to resilient health-care systems, addressing ozone and heatwave impacts, participating in European chemical risk assessments, implementing hormone disruptor plans, training health-care professionals, monitoring exotic mosquitoes, and reducing tick populations. NEHAP3 exemplifies Belgium's commitment to both national and international environment and health goals. |
| Czechia | **Collaborative sub-regional action: highlights from the V4+ Environment and Health Conference**  To contribute to the implementation of Budapest commitments and under the Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), the V4+ Environment and Health Conference convened on 11 March 2024 in Brno, Czechia, offering a platform to address pressing environmental challenges in central and eastern Europe. Structured around key topics such as nature-based solutions, air pollution and its impact on child health, the conference facilitated in-depth discussions and knowledge sharing among experts and policy-makers. Outcomes were presented to the V4+ ministers of environment, underscoring the importance of collaborative efforts in fostering a healthier and more sustainable region.  The V4+ Environment and Health Conference exemplifies subregional commitments and the proactive steps being taken to inform and implement the Budapest commitments. By fostering collaboration and dialogue among central and eastern European countries, the conference not only addressed current environmental health challenges but also paved the way for future initiatives aimed at creating a sustainable and healthy environment for all. |
| Hungary | **Plans to launch new EHP Partnerships**  The National Public Health Centre Proposal in Hungary is developing a proposal for establishment of EHP Partnership on risk reduction in school environment, and on the wastewater surveillance of infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance. |
| Tajikistan | **Adoption of national heat-health action plan**  The first ever national heat-health action plan was adopted in cooperation across multiple national stakeholders to protect adverse health effects of heat. |
| Delivering essential services and a safe built environment for healthy and resilient communities | |
| Azerbaijan | **Green hospitals**  In November 2023, the WHO Country Office in Azerbaijan in cooperation with WHO ECEH convened an information event in Baku for national stakeholders to introduce the concept of environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient hospitals and to discuss possible steps towards piloting such approaches in Azerbaijan. |
| North Macedonia and Uzbekistan | **Driving action on WASH and health**  North Macedonia and Uzbekistan became the 28th and 29th countries, respectively, to join the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe–WHO Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health, thus committing to drive action on WASH and health, while protecting their natural resources and fostering a healthier environment for their citizens. |
| Kazakhstan | **Strengthening capacities in assessing health risks of air pollution**  In December 2023, the WHO Regional Office for Europe held a workshop hosted by Kazakhstan in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to train environmental and public health experts from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on addressing air pollution health risks and setting stricter air quality standards. The workshop, attended by 50 participants, included lectures, group discussions, and hands-on exercises, focusing on Air Quality Guidelines, policy, risk communication, and the AirQ+ tool. This initiative aims to strengthen capacities and mitigate air pollution's health impacts in both countries. |
| Strengthening governance, intersectoral collaboration, human resources and knowledge for health and environment | |
| Georgia | **First national edition of the Bonn School on Environment and Health**  The Bonn Environment and Health School strengthens capacities in Member States to address environment and health challenges, emphasizing leadership for intersectoral policymaking and technical skills. In response to the triple crisis, National Centre for Disease Control in Georgia organized a virtual course on the health impacts of contaminated sites, supported by the WHO Country Office in Georgia and WHO ECEH. The course enhanced participants' understanding and management skills regarding contaminated sites and improved collaboration between health and environmental experts. |
| Italy | **Network of environment and health national and regional experts**  Italy has shown an example on implementing Budapest commitments by creating a network of environment and health national and regional experts. |
| Türkiye | **Post-disaster environmental health needs assessment and training module preparation workshop**  The Ministry of Health and WHO Country Office in Türkiye, in collaboration with WHO ECEH, have joined forces to create a continuous training module for environmental health personnel in the country, focusing on post-disaster environmental health services and resilience. In October 2023, these partners held a workshop to assess the post-disaster environmental health needs and plan the content of the training module. The workshop’s ultimate output will be a report that forms the basis for creating this training module. |
| Ukraine | **Capacity-building on safe management of drinking-water supply and surveillance of water-related disease**  WHO Country Office in Ukraine and WHO ECEH, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Public Health Centre of Ukraine and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hosted two capacity-building workshops in Kyiv: one on the principles underpinning the WHO-recommended, risk-based water safety plan approach and how it can be adopted in the Ukrainian context (17–18 July 2023), and one on effective approaches to surveillance and management of water-related disease outbreaks (20–21 July 2023), including in the context of the war. |

1. HEAL representative informed about the recent expansion of organisation’s [website](https://www.env-health.org/), which now highlights the impact of widespread per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) pollution on six communities across Europe. New social media content has been created to visualize key facts and figures regarding PFAS, aiming to increase online engagement and promote available resources for taking action. These materials feature detailed case studies from Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, France, and Denmark, and are accessible in English, French, Dutch and Italian.

4. Draft PoW for the EHTF and Bonn Dialogues topics 2024–2025

*Relevant documents:*

*EURO/EHTFB12/6 Draft programme of work for the EHTF for 2024–2025*

*EURO/EHTFB12/7 Draft information note on the Bonn Dialogues*

1. Following the presentation of the EHP Secretariat on the draft PoW for the EHTF for 2024–2025 (*ref. Presentation “Session 3 – Discussion on the draft programme”*), and initial proposal for the Bonn Dialogue topics (*ref. Presentation “Session 4 – Bonn Dialogues following the Seventh Ministerial Conference”*), Bureau members discussed various aspects of the draft PoW, including its overall structure and organization (Figure 1).

A diagram of a company

Description automatically generated*Figure 1. Outline of the draft PoW of the EHTF* *for 2024–2025*

1. During the discussion, participants focused on identifying key areas or themes within the draft Programme that require further emphasis or clarification to better align with the objectives of the Budapest Declaration and its Roadmap to 2030. Additionally, proposals for resource mobilization for the activities detailed in the Programme were considered, along with ideas on how the Programme can better support and amplify youth-led initiatives and activities in participants' countries. More detailed country proposals included:

* Clarifying the alignment of Bonn Dialogue topics with the pressing challenges of the triple crisis;
* Considering holding HIC meetings back-to-back with EHTF meetings to optimize resources needed for meetings’ organization;
* Highlighting the co-benefits of hosting EHTF meetings for the host country, such as connections to specific themes and back-to-back capacity building initiatives in further communication with the EHTF.

1. The EEHYC representative appreciated the Bonn School initiative and emphasized the effectiveness of youth-led actions with peers, suggesting improvement in using social media and digital technologies.
2. The UNEP representative emphasized the need for action at COP29, noting that only 17% of the SDGs goals will be achieved by 2030, and highlighted the importance of continued engagement of young people.
3. The HEAL representative suggested expanding the list of upcoming events relevant to the EHTF work with national and youth-led activities organized by countries.
4. Overall, the Bureau supported and agreed on the proposed structure and content of the draft Programme.

5. Preparation for the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF

*Relevant document:*

*EURO/EHTFB12/8 Draft agenda of the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF5*

1. It was announced during the Bureau meeting, the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF will take place in Utrecht, Netherlands on 26−27 June 2024, at the kind invitation of the EHTF Chair. The EHP Partnerships meetings and potential site visits are scheduled for 25 June. EHP Secretariat expressed its gratefulness for the generous support from the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM).
2. EHP Secretariat presented the draft outline of the meeting agenda (*ref. Presentation “Session 5 – Draft agenda of the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF”),* which includes items such as follow-up to the Budapest Conference, draft PoW of the EHTF, Bonn Dialogues, updates on EHP Partnerships and elections of officers.
3. Bureau members agreed with the proposed draft agenda for the EHTF meeting.

6. Update on the EHP Partnerships

1. Participants were updated on the recent developments of the EHP Partnerships by the lead countries (Table 2).

*Table 2. Overview of activities implemented by the EHP Partnerships*

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| **EHP Partnership on Human Biomonitoring (HBM)**  **(Led by Germany and co-led by Georgia)** | The EHP Partnership on HBM held its first meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 28 November 2023, organized by Germany, Georgia, and WHO ECEH. Participants attended in person from 15 countries and online from 2. The meeting featured productive discussions on sharing concepts and tools, national HBM programmes, promoting policies and regulations on HBM, and communicating HBM to stakeholders, laying the groundwork for the Partnership's future activities.  Based on the input collected during the first Partnership meeting, a draft list of future activities was developed and sent to all members for commenting.  An online meeting is planned for June 2023 (exact date to be determined) to discuss the list of activities and start with the preparations for the second Partnership meeting, tentatively scheduled for November 2024 (host country to be determined).  Since the Budapest Conference and as of May 2024, 11 new countries have joined the Partnership, bringing the total to 17 countries. |
| **EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action**  **(Led by Ireland)** | EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action participated in the European roundtable at the global meeting of the [Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health](https://www.who.int/initiatives/alliance-for-transformative-action-on-climate-and-health), which took place on 4–5 March 2024 in Madrid. Youth involvement aimed to advocate for and emphasize the significance of national commitments, policies and capacities in building low-carbon, climate-resilient health systems. The Partnership plans to meet in-person on 13−14 May 2024 in Bonn. |
| **EHP Partnership on Youth**  **(Led by Slovenia and co-led by the International Youth Health Organization)** | In efforts to engage youth and bridge international gaps, the representative of the EHP Partnership on Youth took part in the UNECE [Regional Forum for Sustainable Development](https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/regional-forum-2024) on Sustainable Development Goal 13 round table, contributing to the discussion on [Solving the Rubik’s cube of the planetary crisis: lining up policy solutions for climate risks and biodiversity loss](https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/sdg-13-round-table).  The Partnership co-organized a [side event](https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/11/30/default-calendar/cop28-health-pavilion) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) to follow-up in the [Budapest Youth Declaration](https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/370972?search-result=true&query=Budapest+Youth+Declaration&scope=&rpp=10&sort_by=score&order=desc) implementation. |
| **The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)/EHP Partnership on Healthy Active Mobility**  **(Led by Austria, France and Netherlands (Kingdom of the))** | THE PEP/EHP Partnership on Healthy Active Mobilityis focusing on two main directions: implementing the [Pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion](https://unece.org/info/publications/pub/376488), adopted in 2021 by Member States, and developing the Pan-European Master Plan for Walking. The Partnership plans to gather in Belgrade in April at the [meeting](https://unece.org/pep/events/meeting-under-pep-including-relay-race-workshop-and-meeting-partnership-active-mobility) hosted by the Serbian government. |

1. Participants were also provided with a brief update on the EHP Partnerships that a that are currently in the launching stage, including topics like poison centres, healthy school environment, wastewater surveillance of infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance and environment and health policies at sub-national and local level.
2. EHP Secretariat informed Bureau members about the on-going revision of the EHP Partnerships Terms of Reference (ToR) necessary for their effective implementation and management. The revised ToR will be shared with the EHTF for the online consultation.
3. Bureau members were invited to share with the EHP Secretariat their ideas on how to organize an engaging session at the 14th EHTF meeting. The session would aim to update EHTF members on the work of the EHP Partnerships and the progress made since Budapest, provide a brief overview of future plans and reflect on the new implementation mechanism, present the revised Terms of Reference for the EHP Partnerships, and launch new EHP Partnerships. Feedback will be shared in writing, if any.

7. Update on the composition of the EHTF Bureau and elections

1. EHP Secretariat provided information regarding the Bureau’s composition and the upcoming election of the co-Chair position from the environment sector positions in accordance with the Rules of Procedures (RoP) of the EHTF.
2. Also, Secretariat informed about the on-going revision of the RoP. The main proposed amendments of the current rules address several key aspects:

* To reflect advancements within the EHP since the 2017 Ostrava Ministerial Conference, these references will be removed, making the RoP self-standing;
* Prolonging leadership stability by extending EHTF Chair and Co-Chair terms from one year to two years;
* Streamlining election procedures by instituting two-year Bureau terms and synchronizing elections with the Chair and Co-Chair elections;
* Extending Bureau terms by removing re-election restrictions, allowing members to be re-elected without limits;
* Introducing flexibility in Bureau composition to adjust member representation, with a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 14 members;
* Elevating youth representation by establishing a permanent seat in the Bureau, alongside maintaining current seats for other stakeholders.

1. The revised RoP will be sent to the EHTF and its Bureau for consultation in May 2024.
2. The call for nomination to the EHTF Bureau to fill the vacant positions for representatives from the environment and health sectors will be launched immediately after the Bureau meeting, with the deadline for submissions set for 5 June 2024.

8. Summary of decisions and next steps

1. Bureau members welcomed and agreed with the proposed overall structure and content of the draft PoW for the EHTF, the agenda for the 14th meeting and the information note on the Bonn Dialogues.
2. The Chair summarized the next steps leading up to the next EHTF meeting on 26−27 June 2024 in Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the):

* The consultation for written feedback from the Bureau on the documents and proposals for the format of the EHTF meeting sessions remains open until 7 May 2024. After this period, the EHP Secretariat will integrate received feedback into the draft PoW for the EHTF, the agenda for the 14th meeting, and the information note on the Bonn Dialogues. These documents will be shared for further consultation with the EHTF. The EHTF will consider the approval of these documents, along with the revised RoP of the EHTF and ToR of the EHP Partnerships, at its next meeting in Utrecht.
* As recommended by the Bureau, EHP Secretariat will clarify the alignment of proposed Bonn Dialogue topics with the pressing challenges of the triple crisis.
* The EHP Secretariat will launch a call for expressions of interest to serve in the EHTF Bureau, with the deadline for submissions set for 5 June 2024.

1. The Chair closed the meeting, thanking participants for their active participation and valuable contributions, and the Secretariat for the meeting preparation.

Annex 1. List of participants

**Members of the EHTF Bureau**

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Annex 2. Provisional programme

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| 10:00 – 10:10 | **Session 1 – Opening, adoption of the agenda** |
| *The Bureau is invited to adopt the agenda and the programme of the meeting.*  *Relevant documents:*  *EURO/EHTFB12/1 List of documents*  *EURO/EHTFB12/2 Scope and Purpose*  *EURO/EHTFB12/3 Provisional Agenda*  *EURO/EHTFB12/4 Provisional Programme* |
| 10:10 – 10:30 | **Session 2 – Follow-up to the Budapest Conference: where are we?** |
| *In this session, participants will be provided with examples of the Budapest commitments implementation by Member States and stakeholders.*  *Relevant documents:*  *EURO/EHTFB12/9* [*Seventy-third Regional Committee for Europe: Astana, 24–26 October 2023: decision: declaration of the Seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health*](https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/373759)  *EURO/EHTFB12/10* [*COP28 UAE Declaration on climate and health*](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/cop28-uae-declaration-on-climate-and-health)  *EURO/EHTFB12/11* [*EHP Newsletter*](https://www.who.int/europe/publications/m/item/ehp-newsletter-october-december-2023)*, October-December 2023*  *EURO/EHTFB12/12* [*Special issue of the EHP Newsletter*](https://www.who.int/europe/publications/m/item/ehp-newsletter-april-september-2023)*, April-September 2023*  *EURO/EHTFB12/13* [*Implementation of the EHP: progress report*](https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/372931)  *EURO/EHTFB12/14* [*Report of the Seventh Ministerial Conference*](https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2024-9065-48837-72709) *(Budapest, 5–7 July 2023)*  *EURO/EHTFB12/15* [*Report of the Special Session of the EHTF*](https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2023-9041-48813-72664) *(Budapest, 4 July 2023)*  *EURO/EHTFB12/16* [*Report of the thirteenth meeting of the EHTF*](https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/370145) *(Brussels, 20–21 April 2023)* |
| 10:30 – 11:30 | **Session 3 – Discussion on the draft programme of work for the EHTF for 2024–2025** |
| *Following the presentation on the draft programme of work for the EHTF for 2024–2025, the Bureau will have the opportunity to delve into its structure and content, providing insights and feedback.*  *Relevant document:*  *EURO/EHTFB12/6 Draft programme of work for the EHTF for 2024–2025* |
| 11:30 – 12:00 | **Break** |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | **Session 4 – Proposal for the programme for the Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health for 2024–2025** |
| *In this session, the EHTF Bureau will review the proposal for the Dialogues' topics in the biennium 2024-2025.*  *Relevant document:*  *EURO/EHTFB12/7 Draft information note on the Bonn Dialogues following the Seventh Ministerial Conference* |
| 12:30 – 13:00 | **Session 5 – Preparation for the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF** |
| *In this session aimed at preparing for the EHTF meeting (26-27 June 2024), participants will be invited to discuss the agenda and the programme.*  *Relevant document:*  *EURO/EHTFB12/8 Draft agenda of the fourteenth meeting of the EHTF* |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | **Session 6 – Update on the EHP Partnerships** |
| *EHTF Bureau will be updated on the recent developments of the EHP Partnerships. The Secretariat will provide updates on the on-going revision of the Terms of Reference for the EHP Partnerships.* |
| 14:00 – 14:20 | **Session 7 – Update on the composition of the EHTF Bureau, and forthcoming elections according to the EHTF Rules of Procedures** |
| *The EHP Secretariat will provide information regarding the Bureau’s composition, the upcoming election of the co-Chair from the environment sector and the on-going revision of the Rules of Procedure of the EHTF.* |
| 14:20 – 14:30 | **Session 8 – Any other business, summary of decisions, next steps and closure of meeting** |