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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/EHTFB12/8** |
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| **Virtual** | **15 April 2024** |
| **22 April 2024** | **Original: English** |

**Draft information note on the Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health following the Seventh Ministerial Conference**

**Prepared by the EHP Secretariat**

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| The Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health, organized by the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, serve as a pivotal platform for engaging high-level discussions among policy makers within the WHO European Region. This information note provides insight into the contextual framework of the Dialogues. Additionally, it presents a proposal for the Bonn Dialogues programme, poised for integration into the draft Programme of Work for the EHTF for 2024–2025. This note is submitted to the EHTF Bureau for further discussion at its twelfth meeting. |

**Introduction**

* + - 1. The [Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health](https://www.who.int/europe/teams/who-european-centre-for-environment-and-health-%28bonn-germany%29/bonn-dialogues-on-environment-and-health) is a series of high-level online events, aimed at fostering discussions among policy makers across the WHO European Region on selected themes and topics, and providing the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) – the leading international body for implementation and monitoring of the European Environment and Health Process (EHP) – with evidence and reflection points on well-known and emerging environment and health issues.
			2. The Bonn Dialogues are organized and promoted by the EHP Secretariat, located in the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, Bonn, Germany, in the framework of the programme of the work of the EHTF.

## Background

* + - 1. The EHTF decided, at its tenth meeting in February 2021, to launch the Bonn Dialogues as a tool to shape the agenda of the Seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, held in Budapest, Hungary, on 5-7 July 2023. The EHTF also adopted the first programme for the implementation of the initiative.
			2. In March 2022, the EHP Secretariat launched a call for interest to lead and participate in the Dialogues, receiving a total of sixteen submissions from ten Member States and one stakeholder. Based on the input received, the EHP Secretariat developed a programme of Bonn Dialogues, that was discussed and approved by the EHTF.
			3. During the preparation for the seventh Ministerial Conference a total of five Bonn Dialogues were organized, all in a virtual format. The sixth and seventh Dialogues were organized following the Conference:
* 1st Dialogue (14 October 2021): *WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines: reinforcing the nexus between environment and health in the context of “building forward better*”

Led by Germany focused on air quality and health, in particular with reference to the [WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/345329?search-result=true&query=WHO+Global+Air+Quality+Guidelines&scope=&rpp=10&sort_by=score&order=desc) launched in September 2021. The Dialogue offered an opportunity to explore synergies and highlight knowledge, platforms and resources that are available at the international level to support national actions to address the root causes of air pollution. It also equipped participants with a stronger health argument for reinforced climate action.

* 2nd Dialogue (8 December 2021): *Nature, biodiversity and health: green and blue spaces for promoting health*

Led by Lithuania and Denmark, focused on nature, biodiversity and health, with a particular focus on the connection between blue and green spaces and mental health, and with reference to the WHO report “[Nature, biodiversity and health: an overview of interconnections](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341376)”. The Dialogue continued with an optional session, organized in breakout rooms, discussing the topic further, in addition to presenting decision support tools related to green and blue spaces.

* 3rd Dialogue (3 June 2022): *Walking and cycling for green, healthy and sustainable mobility*

Led by Switzerland and the Netherlands (Kingdom of the), and organized in partnership with the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), the Dialogue focused on the role of walking and cycling for green, healthy and sustainable mobility, marking the World Bicycle Day. The event was also an opportunity to launch a new publication under THE PEP framework: “[Walking and cycling: latest evidence to support policy-making and practice](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/354589)”.

* 4th Dialogue (14 October 2022): *Risk communication for environment and health*

Led by Israel, focused on risk communication for environment and health. The main objectives of this Dialogue were to take stock of the latest evidence from risk communication for environment and health practices, and to exchange views on policy opportunities and emerging approaches to design and implement policies and measures that promote efficient risk communication. Case studies from Israel, Austria, Hungary and the perspective from an NGO were presented and discussed. The background document for this event “[Effective Risk Communication for Environment and Health](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/349338?search-result=true&query=risk+communication+environment&scope=%2F&rpp=10&sort_by=score&order=desc)” was prepared as part of the Health and Environment Research Agenda project funded by the European Union.

* 5th Dialogue (21 February 2023): *Preventing and reducing negative impacts of hazardous chemicals on health and environment*

Led by the Netherlands (Kingdom of the), focused on the impacts of hazardous chemicals on health and environment. The main objectives of the Dialogue were to take stock of current approaches towards preventing and reducing the negative impacts of hazardous chemicals on health and environment; to exchange views on policy opportunities, emerging approaches and best practices to prevent and reduce the impact of hazardous chemicals, and to highlight tools in support of the implementation of policies on the prevention of emissions and releases of hazardous chemicals, like the “Safe and Sustainable by Design” framework.

* 6th Dialogue (8 September 2023): *Progress in the WHO European Region towards the SDGs in the context of the Ostrava Declaration on Environment and Health: mid-way to 2030*.

Led by Belgium, the Dialogue was the opportunity to discuss the report launched at the seventh Ministerial Conference on “[Progress in the WHO European Region towards the SDGs in the context of the Ostrava Declaration on Environment and Health: mid-way to 2030](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/368166?search-result=true&query=Progress+in+the+WHO+European+Region+towards+the+SDGs&scope=&rpp=10&sort_by=score&order=desc)*”.* The report takes stock of the progress made in implementing the Ostrava Declaration on Environment and Health in the WHO European Region.

* 7th Dialogue (30 January 2024): *Using behavioural and cultural insights
(BCI) for environment and health*

The Dialogue, stemming from a collaboration between the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health and WHO/Europe’s BCI Unit, spotlighted innovation, documentation and knowledge exchange as drivers of an effective application of BCI in the context of environment and health. The behaviours and actions, at the societal and individual level, will play a significant role in the coming years in the achievement of the Budapest objectives, complementing institutional processes and creating bottom-up pressure on governments.

## The Bonn Dialogues following the Budapest Ministerial Conference

* + - 1. The Bonn Dialogues were originally established to support the preparations of the Budapest Conference, providing an opportunity to focus on different themes and priorities to be addressed by the Ministerial Declaration. The continuation of the Bonn Dialogues programme after the Budapest Conference will assume a different connotation: they could contribute to accelerating the implementation of the Budapest Declaration commitments, by providing a platform for showcasing countries' commitments, exchanging knowledge and expertise, and discussing concrete challenges, achievements and initiatives.
			2. The choice of discussion topics for the future Dialogues should be guided by the priorities outlined by the Member States in 2022 and by the Budapest Declaration within the context of the triple crisis. These priorities encompass:
* health impacts of environmental pollution and climate change;
* recognition of nature as a key determinant of health;
* ensuring everyone has access to safe WASH facilities;
* promoting a clean, safe and healthy built environment;
* ensuring the resilience of essential community services;
* a focus on factors that enable implementation, such as governance, workforce capacity, cross-sectoral cooperation, and research;
* just transition towards resilient, healthy, equitable and sustainable societies;
* empowerment of youth organizations to make their actions more relevant in policy-making and implementation.
	+ - 1. The Budapest Conference established the “EHP Partnerships”, a new mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the commitments taken. The Partnerships bring together like-minded countries on a specific thematic area to work on joint projects and activities. The Bonn Dialogues and the EHP Partnerships have the potential to synergize their efforts by co-hosting collaborative events.
			2. The Bonn Dialogues could also serve as a platform for subregional consultations. Countries interested in convening and addressing issues tailored to their specific needs could consider the possibility of utilizing the Bonn Dialogue mechanism for such discussions.
			3. The format of the Bonn Dialogues has proven to align perfectly with expectations, in terms of providing sufficient opportunities for speakers to exchange ideas and proposals. Typically, a “lead country” initiates the Dialogue by providing opening remarks, followed by a keynote speech introducing the subject matter, which is then discussed by a panel, featuring high-level representatives from Member States and stakeholders in the environment and health domains, including leading scientists, civil society organizations, local and regional networks, academia, UN agencies and international and regional organizations. However, flexibility is encouraged to accommodate specific requirements.
			4. The proposed frequency for organizing the Dialogues is approximately every three to four months. The specific timing may be influenced by concurrent international events related to the environment and health and can also be adjusted based on the interests of Member States and stakeholders.

**Next steps**

* + - 1. The EHTF Bureau is invited to consider the continuation of the Bonn Dialogues in the biennium 2024-2025, and to review the proposal for the Dialogues' programme (Annex). Also, the Bureau is encouraged to suggest new topics based on prioritization relevant to their country or sub-region's work. The EHP Secretariat proposes to the EHTF and its Bureau to maintain the calendar as a rolling set of activities, accessible to all Member States and EHP stakeholders in an appropriate format, ideally on the EHP SharePoint website.

**Annex. Draft proposal for the programme of the Bonn Dialogues**

The table below presents the draft proposal for the Bonn Dialogues programme, which is expected to be integrated in the draft Programme of Work of the EHTF for 2024-2025. It includes a concise overview of the main objectives of the Dialogues, the intended audience, potential topics, format, frequency and resource needs.

The selection of Bonn Dialogue topics is based on the expressions of interest and priorities identified by Member States in 2022 and aligned with the Budapest Declaration, considering the challenges posed by the triple crisis (see para. 8).

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| **Objective** | The main objectives of the Bonn Dialogues:* offer policymakers a valuable platform for discussions focusing on the implementation of Budapest and previous Ministerial Conferences’ commitments;
* facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge among governments at both the national and subnational levels, enabling them to seize the opportunities and address and overcome the challenges they encounter while striving to implement the Budapest commitments.
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| **Participants** | EHTF members, stakeholders, high-level representatives of Member States, leading scientists, youth and the EHP Secretariat. |
| **Tentative topics**  | This list outlines proposed topics in the latter half of 2024 and 2025, and is pending for further prioritization and EHTF discussion:* Dialogue on the active mobility for the World Bicycle Day or the European Mobility Week.
* Dialogue on health impact assessment / health in the environmental assessment as a tool for urban planning and health for all / health in all policies.
* Dialogue on Planetary Health and One Health, e.g. for the latter: Integrating environment and health into One Health and the economic argument for One Health.
* Dialogue on National Portfolios of Actions on Environment and Health.
* Dialogue on environment and injury prevention.
* Dialogue on promoting environment and health policies at local level in follow-up to the recent launch of the WHO [publication](https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/369596).
* Dialogue on the uptake and impact of the WHO environmental noise guidelines for the WHO European Region [publication](https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/369233?order=desc&query=Uptake+and+impact+of+the+WHO+Environmental+noise+guidelines+for+the+European+Region%3A+experiences+from+Member+States&rpp=10&scope=&search-result=true&sort_by=score).
* Dialogue on health-related priorities in chemical safety – focus on poison centres.
* Dialogue on human biomonitoring: importance for protecting human health from negative impacts of chemicals following the recent launch of the WHO [publication](https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/368102?order=desc&query=Human+biomonitoring+programmes%3A+importance+for+protecting+human+health+from+negative+impacts+of+chemicals%3A+technical+summary&rpp=10&scope=&search-result=true&sort_by=score).
* Dialogue on Environmentally Sustainable Health Systems.
* Dialogue on contaminated sites and health.
* Dialogue with a subregional focus (e.g., Central Asia and Western Balkans, linked to the WHO Roadmaps).
* Dialogue on environmental health inequalities.
* Dialogue on nature-based solutions and health (22 May 2025 (International Day for Biological Diversity)).
* Dialogue on Professional Profiles.
* Dialogue on the aspects related to water and sanitation in preparation of the Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health.
* Dialogue on climate change and health in preparation of the COP30.
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| **Frequency** | The frequency could fall within a range of approximately every four months. The specific dates will be confirmed about two months before the event.  |
| **Format** | A virtual format of 1.5–2 hours. Hybrid or in-person Dialogue could also be arranged, necessitating extra resource.  |
| **Language** | English with simultaneous interpretation into Russian. |
| **Resources needed** | Costs to hold six virtual Bonn Dialogues in 2024-2025 are estimated in ca 30,000 USD if held virtually (ca. 5,000 each to cover interpretation costs and communications material). Resource mobilization efforts are needed to identify funds. |