

**Executive Officers Meeting on Governance and  
Capacities for Environment and Health**

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**Bonn, Germany  
2–4 December 2024**

**6 September 2024**

## **Scope and purpose**

The WHO European Region continues to face important environment and health challenges, with trends indicating that many of the Sustainable Development Goals related to environment and health are unlikely to be met by 2030 - in spite of progress achieved on several fronts over the last decades. While important successes have been achieved in terms of negotiating new multilateral policy instruments, several challenges slow down their implementation.

As leaders continue to manage ongoing environment and health agendas and to respond to environmental crises, there is a pressing need to adapt governance and capacity strategies to the rapidly shifting political priorities such as moving towards sustainable, green, zero-pollution and carbon-neutral economies while ensuring a just transition. This requires bold and resilient leadership, robust governance and institutional structures, and fit-for-purpose capacities. Maintaining public trust and ensuring effective communication are crucial, especially in the face of mis- and dis-information regarding health impacts of climate change, chemicals, and other environment and health factors.

The Seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, held in Budapest in 2023, has recognized the importance of cross-cutting enabling factors, such as governance, capacities, and resources for environment health, as critical to achieving progress at the pace and scale that are needed. At the Conference, Member States have agreed to stimulate a reflection on how these factors can be best leveraged to drive progress across the Region. Within this context, this meeting aims to provide a dynamic platform for an open discussion among peers and facilitate the exchange of experiences and ideas, innovative solutions, and frameworks to scale and adopt effective approaches to environment and health governance and capacity-building in countries of the WHO European Region. The meeting will also foster multidisciplinary knowledge exchange, multisectoral alliances, and strong, lasting networks among national executives, in turn driving forward the Budapest commitments to provide a healthier environment for all.

The focus of the meeting will be on accelerating implementation of environment and health policy priorities in response to the triple ecological crisis - environmental pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss - amidst other challenges.

Using engaging and dynamic meeting approaches and drawing from participants' first-hand experiences and knowledge, discussions will be based around, but not limited to:

### **Governance and Leadership**

- National institutional leadership and governance structures
- Inter-sectoral collaboration to integrate environment and health in various sectors and policies
- Streamlining environment and health policy implementation across governmental levels

### **Resources**

- Workforce competencies and training curricula for addressing contemporary and emerging environment and health challenges
- Financial and economic aspects, including economic incentives, efficient use of national budgets, public-private partnerships, and mobilizing resources from trust funds and financial institutions

### **Knowledge Transfer, Communication, and Advocacy**

- Translating environment and health research findings and evidence into national policies and action plans
- Strategic communication and outreach to effectively advocate for environment and health, including combating dis- and mis-information

Ahead of the meeting, participants will receive a background paper summarizing key governance mechanisms and approaches, along with national case studies on environment and health governance and lessons learned. Senior experts will provide stimulating input statements sharing their insights and experiences to start the discussions and will remain available as resource persons throughout the meeting. Interactive panel sessions and laboratories to discuss governance and capacities in relation to topics such as climate change, air quality, greening healthcare systems, and environment and health in urban settings will provide numerous opportunities for direct exchange and networking. This will enable participants to identify effective governance responses and opportunities for inter-sectoral collaboration and chart a path forward for addressing environment and health challenges at national and institutional level.