



EUROPE

Regional Committee for Europe Fifty-fourth session

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Resolution

Environment and health

The Regional Committee,

Emphasizing that high priority should be given to achieving an environment conducive to health for all, particularly children, in the European Region;

Welcoming the progress made towards this aim over the past fifteen years through the Environment and Health process, supported by the work of the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC);

Believing that the Environment and Health process will continue to make major contributions to the health of the people of the European Region in the twenty-first century;

1. **ENDORSES** the decisions of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, held in Budapest in June 2004, as included in the Conference Declaration (the Budapest Declaration) and the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE), and **REQUESTS** that particular attention be paid to developing a harmonized environment and health information system, as well as to drawing up policies that will further protect public health from the impacts of major environment-related hazards such as those arising from climate change, housing and chemicals;
2. **RECOGNIZES** the need to establish effective mechanisms for coordinating technical and financial assistance to the newly independent states and countries of south-eastern Europe, in order to

stimulate legislative and institutional reforms, strengthen those countries' capacities and effectively reduce exposures to environmental hazards;

3. NOTES the commitments set out in the CEHAPE and RECOMMENDS:

- (a) that child-specific actions are incorporated into ongoing national plans such as national environment and health action plans before the first intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the Fifth Ministerial Conference, to be held by the end of 2007;
- (b) that political, technical and financial resources are mobilized, so as to stimulate implementation of the CEHAPE at the subregional level within countries and throughout the Region;

4. AGREES to reconstitute the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) with a mandate up to the Fifth Ministerial Conference to be held in Italy in 2009 and to broaden its membership in accordance with the recommendations made and the new terms of reference agreed upon at the Budapest Conference;

5. INVITES the new committee to continue to facilitate and promote the actions set out in the Budapest Declaration, drawing particular attention to the need to:

- (a) ensure the exchange and dissemination of information and coordination of the actions required to implement the Budapest Declaration and the CEHAPE among countries, international organizations and civil society;
- (b) work with all relevant stakeholders, and particularly countries of the European Region, to ensure reporting back on implementation of the actions decided by the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Budapest;
- (c) further develop the Environment and Health process in Europe by facilitating and promoting partnerships with stakeholders in all relevant sectors and ensuring cooperation and coordination with associated organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and related processes, as well as by working closely with the European Union (EU) to ensure full coordination between actions foreseen in the EU Environment and Health Strategy and the commitments made by Member States in Budapest;

- (d) report annually to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe on achievements and areas needing greater efforts, as well as on the EEHC's activities, work plan and financial requirements;
- (e) organize, together with the secretariat at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the first intergovernmental preparatory meeting by the end of 2007, as a mid-term review;
- (f) provide all Member States, through the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, by 2007, with a detailed proposal for the agenda of the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in Italy in 2009;

6. URGES Member States to share in providing the necessary financial support to the WHO Regional Office for Europe's environment and health activities, and in particular to the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health;

7. REQUESTS the Regional Director to continue to support implementation of the decisions taken at previous conferences, and in particular the Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health, as developed in the joint WHO-UNECE Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme;

8. REQUESTS the Regional Director to continue to provide leadership to the Environment and Health process in the European Region by further promoting the Regional Office's and country offices' activities in the following areas, with special attention to vulnerable population groups such as children:

- supporting effective implementation of the decisions taken in Budapest and the requests of Member States for actions in specific areas detailed therein;
- continuing to address the links between health and the environment and to assess health impacts;
- monitoring trends, conducting research and developing scenarios on exposures, health effects and policy responses and requirements;
- developing evidence-based norms, guidelines and risk assessment tools for application at all relevant levels, with special reference to assessment of the burden of environment-related diseases on health systems;

- identifying appropriate risk management techniques, including those addressing risk communication and perception, through the collection, analysis and interpretation of case studies as well as the identification of best practices;
- supporting further work on health decision-making under scientific uncertainty and the application of the precautionary principle;
- supporting capacity-building at technical and policy levels to facilitate Member States' actions and responses, such as the initiative taken by the Commonwealth of Independent States and a number of countries of south-eastern Europe on reforming and building up the capacity of sanitary/epidemiological surveillance services and strengthening public health systems;
- supporting capacity-building at technical and policy levels to facilitate Member States' actions in establishing practical and institutional mechanisms for effective implementation that meets the legislative requirements for health impact assessments in the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary context;
- advocating the inclusion of environment and health considerations in the policies and actions of other sectors;
- promoting effective emergency preparedness and response capacity on emerging and re-emerging environmental health threats such as those related to extreme weather events.