



## Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

“Protecting children’s health in a  
changing environment”

Parma, Italy, 10–12 March 2010



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# The European Environment and Health Process (2010–2016): Institutional framework

## Introduction

The European Environment and Health Process (EEHP) will continue towards the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2016. To ensure appropriate coordination between national implementation and international policies, an institutional framework is being proposed to ensure the proper level of monitoring and implementation, as well as political drive.

## National mechanisms and structures

Member States are urged to set up or strengthen existing national environment and health mechanisms most appropriate to their specific national circumstances, to ensure implementation of the Parma Ministerial Conference commitments.

## The European Environment and Health Task Force

The European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) will be the leading international body for implementation and monitoring of the EEHP.

## Composition

The EHTF will include leading officials from the national implementation mechanisms and structures of the 53 Member States in the WHO European Region, nominated at national level as focal points for the EEHP.

WHO, the European Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the International Trade Union Confederation, the Regional Environment Centre, the Health and Environment Alliance, the European Eco-Forum and the Environment and Health Youth Network will be full members of the EHTF.

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### Conference Secretariat

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## **Terms of reference**

The EHTF will:

- provide a forum for exchange of technical experience and knowledge through discussion and exchange of good practice;
- regularly review scientific evidence with the support of WHO, UNECE, UNEP and other relevant institutions in order to encourage Member States to update, modify or strengthen existing policies, as appropriate;
- facilitate collaboration among relevant sectors, partners and stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, trade unions, the business community, young people, technical agencies and international financial institutions;
- promote specific initiatives on emerging issues;
- establish ad hoc working groups, task forces and other bodies, as necessary, on a temporary basis to address specific needs and issues;
- collaborate closely with the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board.

## **Method of work**

The EHTF will meet annually in the period leading up to the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2016. One of the EHTF meetings will be a high-level mid-term meeting to review progress in implementation of the EEHP and its institutional framework, which will be convened no later than 2014. This high-level meeting will also be attended by deputy ministers or state secretaries, chief medical officers and senior environmental administrators.

The EHTF will be led by a chairperson and a co-chairperson, one from the health sector and one from the environment sector, elected at the first meeting. The chairpersons will hold their seat for one year only, in order to ensure rotation among as many countries as possible in the six-year span of the Task Force. To ensure continuity of the process, at the end of his/her one-year term of office, the co-chairperson will become the chairperson, and a new co-chairperson will be elected. The outgoing chairperson will be called upon to provide advice to the chairperson and the new co-chairperson, as required, forming a sort of “EHTF troika”.

## **The European Environment and Health Ministerial Board**

The European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB) will be the political face and driving force of international policies in the field of environment and health for implementation of the commitments made within the EEHP.

## **Composition**

The EHMB will consist of eight ministers or their high-level representatives appointed by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe for the health sector and UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, for the environment sector, in a way that ensures geographic representation of all parts of the WHO European Region and equal representation of the health and environment sectors. Ministers will serve a two-year term of office.

Other members of the Ministerial Board will include the WHO Regional Director for Europe, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Europe and the European Commission.

During their tenure, the chairperson and co-chairperson of the EHTF will be members of the EHMB, to ensure close links between the two bodies.

### **Terms of reference**

The EHMB will:

- put the European Environment and Health Process into a broad public health and environment agenda;
- review and propose policy directions and strategic priorities;
- advocate further development of environment and health policies;
- identify financial opportunities that would enable implementation where resources are lacking;
- reach out to other sectors and stakeholders;
- collaborate closely with the European Environment and Health Task Force.

### **Method of work**

The EHMB will select two co-chairs from among its members.

The EHMB will be accountable to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP). The EHMB will develop its agenda and role to ensure the political relevance and effective leadership of the whole EEHP. Its annual meetings will be arranged back-to-back with sessions of the Regional Committee and meetings of the CEP in alternating years, to facilitate attendance and to ensure the link to the two bodies that are its source of legitimacy.

### **Secretariat**

The whole institutional framework will be serviced by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, which will cooperate closely with UNECE and UNEP Regional Office for Europe.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

The WHO Regional Committee for Europe, at its sixtieth session to be held in Moscow in September 2010, will be asked to take the necessary action to endorse the outcomes of the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, at its meeting in October 2010, will be asked to do the same. The WHO Regional Committee for Europe will appoint members of the EHMB from the health sector, while members from the environment sector will be appointed by UNECE's CEP.

Before the end of 2010, Member States will be asked to nominate focal points for the EEHP, to provide an operational network for continuous collaboration between Member States and to attend the first meeting of the EHTF, to be held no later than June 2011. This will ensure a quick start to implementation of the political outcomes of the Fifth Ministerial Conference and timely reporting back to the meeting of the EHMB to be held back-to-back with the sixty-first session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in 2011.

The EHTF and the EHMB will elaborate their terms of reference and develop their rules of procedure in line with the present document.