



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH PROCESS



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROCESS NEWSLETTER

October–December 2025



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1. EDITORIAL

Dear reader,

This October–December 2025 newsletter shows how countries across the WHO European Region – and the partners working with them – are stepping up to face the major (or defining) challenges of our time: climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss.

Scroll down to catch up on the latest news, fresh publications and what is coming next on the events calendar.

Stay in the loop: get the [European Environment and Health Process \(EHP\) newsletter](#) delivered to you every quarter.

Warmest regards,
EHP Secretariat





2. TOP STORIES

Pan-European Protocol on Water and Health at 20: promoting resilience amid global crises

5–7 November 2025, Budapest, Hungary



© Ministry of Interior, Hungary

The [seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health](#) brought together 230 participants from over 40 countries, marking two decades of measurable impact since the [Protocol](#) entered into force.

At its core, the Protocol is a powerful platform for regional cooperation, aligning countries across the pan-European region around a shared commitment to building safe, sustainable and resilient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems for all.

High-level segment [takeaways](#) were focused on strengthening the resilience of water and sanitation systems for a safer and healthier future. Parties and partners to the Protocol reaffirmed the ongoing need to build the resilience of communities and health systems in response to unfolding global crises, to translate global and regional commitments into national action, and to strengthen governance. Future investment priorities should focus on creating climate-resilient, inclusive and digitally enabled water and sanitation systems alongside protecting ecosystems and ensuring the continuity of safe services in times of crisis.

Protocol on Water and Health

The [Protocol on Water and Health](#) to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes is a legal, multilateral instrument jointly supported by WHO/Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Since its adoption in 1999 and entry into force in 2005, the work under the Protocol has been instrumental in advancing the WASH and health agenda at the regional level and driving progress in countries across the pan-European region towards related global, regional and national targets. The Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol is held every 3 years.



Equally clear was the call for strong policy coherence, capacity building and cross-border partnerships; positioning the Protocol as a catalyst for regional solidarity, shared accountability and lasting impact.

Looking ahead, the key messages and recommendations emerging from the high-level segment will feed directly into the United Nations (UN) 2026 Water Conference (United Arab Emirates, 2–4 December 2026). This will ensure that the valuable experience gained over two decades of multilateral cooperation within the WHO European Region contributes to global progress towards achieving universal access to safe and sustainable WASH for all.

Here are the key decisions and main highlights from the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health.

Access all meeting documents, presentations and photos [here](#).

For further reading, click on the following:

- WHO/Europe media release: [Pan-European Protocol on Water and Health at 20: promoting resilience amid global crises](#).
- Statement of the WHO Regional Director for Europe: [Safe water, sanitation and hygiene is a matter of survival, dignity and prosperity](#).

Key decisions

The Meeting of the Parties adopted:

- an ambitious [programme of work](#) for the period 2026 to 2028, with building resilience of WASH systems and services as a cross-cutting priority;
- a long-term implementation [Strategy](#) for the Protocol;
- a [decision on targets for financial sustainability](#), reinforcing the need for predictable and durable funding; and
- a [decision on compliance](#), strengthening implementation and accountability.

Main highlights

The main highlights were the following:

- North Macedonia and Uzbekistan – and soon after the meeting also Kazakhstan (see the Country activity section below) – were welcomed as the newest Parties, having joined since 2023;
- the Republic of Moldova was elected Chair – with North Macedonia and Hungary as Vice-Chairs (2026–2028) – and will host the 2028 Meeting of the Parties; and
- a broad range of practical tools and publications were launched at the meeting (further details are available in the Latest publications section).



Photo: moments from the seventh session of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health. © Ministry of Interior, Hungary



The WHO Bonn School on Environment and Health highlights nature and health linkages in a successful online course

From 13 October to 10 November 2025, the WHO Bonn School successfully delivered its online course on nature and health, attracting 31 participants from 29 countries, as well as the European Commission and the European Environment Agency. The course, a flagship initiative of the Bonn School, strengthened participants' understanding of the interconnections between nature, biodiversity and human health, drawing on the latest scientific evidence and contributions from around 20 lecturers from WHO collaborating centres and academia.

Participants engaged in problem-based, interdisciplinary projects addressing flood mitigation, heatwaves, noncommunicable diseases, pollution prevention, zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, invasive species, and health system co-benefits through nature-based interventions, showcasing the Bonn School's role as a hub for training, knowledge exchange, and applied solutions at the nexus of environment and health.





3. COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

This section provides the opportunity to learn more on how countries are showcasing efforts to tackle health challenges arising from the triple

crisis of climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss.

Albania and **Montenegro** finalized their national inventories of all mercury-containing medical devices

Albania and Montenegro have completed national inventories of all mercury-containing medical devices, including thermometers and sphygmomanometers, as a key step toward phasing them out in health care. Supported by WHO/Europe and under a five-year United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Environment Facility project, both countries are implementing pilot initiatives in selected health-care facilities to replace mercury devices with safer alternatives, train

staff in safe handling and disposal, and raise awareness among health professionals and the public. These efforts align with the [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#) and aim to reduce human exposure and environmental pollution. The project is expected to significantly decrease mercury use, providing safer health care and environmental protection for communities across the Region. Read more on the WHO/Europe [website](#).

Kazakhstan ratified the Protocol on Water and Health, strengthening regional leadership

In December 2025, Kazakhstan ratified the [Protocol on Water and Health](#). With this milestone, Kazakhstan becomes the second country in central Asia and the 30th Party to join the agreement.

By acceding to the Protocol, Kazakhstan reinforces its commitment to protecting public health through sustainable water management, improved sanitation and the prevention of water-related diseases. This step strengthens resilience, cooperation and health security across the pan-European region.



North Macedonia advances heat–health resilience with a new national action plan

North Macedonia has developed an updated Heat Health Action Plan for 2025–2030. Building on over a decade of experience, the plan introduces a colour-coded alert system, clear protocols for health and social services and targeted measures to protect vulnerable populations. The plan was activated during recent summer heatwaves, with higher alert phases implemented across relevant agencies. Authorities are currently collecting data to evaluate the effectiveness of the response.

In addition, in collaboration with the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO ECEH) and WHO headquarters, Canada and North Macedonia, as part of a pilot project, are conducting a financial impact assessment to better understand the costs and benefits of implementing the updated plans. This initiative represents a key step in strengthening North Macedonia's preparedness for extreme heat events and aligns with the broader objectives of the [Budapest Declaration](#).

The Republic of Moldova advances multisectoral action through a One Health conference

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova, the National Agency for Public Health, Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy and partners, in collaboration with WHO ECEH, the WHO Country Office in the Republic of Moldova and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), organized the third National Conference "One Health Approach for Global Health Security".

The conference strengthened multisectoral collaboration, facilitated the exchange of best practices and enhanced national preparedness for health threats at the human–animal–environment interface.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of a national resolution committing to accelerate the One Health agenda and further integrate joint action across sectors.

A national capacity-building workshop in Turkmenistan on environment and health within the One Health approach

Held on 17–18 November 2025 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, the workshop, led by WHO in collaboration with FAO, UNEP and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) of the European One Health quadripartite, and the World Bank, addressed the growing health risks linked to environmental degradation, climate change, pollution and zoonotic diseases, and supported Turkmenistan's participation in the Pandemic Fund's multi-country One Health

project in central Asia. Bringing together representatives from health, agriculture, water, academia and international partners, the event strengthened understanding of the environment's role in One Health, promoted intersectoral coordination, identified surveillance and training gaps, and contributed to reinforcing environmental components in pandemic preparedness and response planning.



National meeting in **Turkmenistan** to strengthen commitments on WASH and health

On 17 December 2025, the WHO Country Office in Turkmenistan, jointly with UNECE, convened a national meeting to present the country's baseline analysis on water, sanitation, hygiene and health. Organized under the Protocol on Water and Health, the meeting gathered key ministries, government agencies

and international partners to discuss national priorities, share experiences and explore the benefits of the [Protocol on Water and Health](#). The event underscored Turkmenistan's commitment to improving WASH systems and services and protecting public health.

Ukraine drives action on health-care waste and water safety with WHO support

In December 2025, Ukraine took a major step towards ensuring safer and more resilient health services by convening national and regional stakeholders to strengthen health-care waste management and water safety in frontline facilities. A high-level meeting presented findings from a WHO-supported national study on waste practices and treatment capacity, sparking dialogue on aligning policies with WHO and European (EU) standards and optimizing treatment capacity. This was followed by a practical workshop with teams from nine oblasts, building skills for risk-based water safety through sanitary inspections,

simple testing and stress-testing a streamlined checklist. With technical support from WHO headquarters and WHO ECEH, these efforts reinforced Ukraine's leadership in advancing investment priorities, coordination and stepwise implementation of the [Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool \(WASH FIT\)](#) and water safety planning, striving for quality care even in high-risk settings. At the meeting, a new course on WASH FIT was launched in Ukrainian.



4. RECENT EVENTS

In the past three months several important events in the field of environment and health have taken place; a few of which are highlighted below.

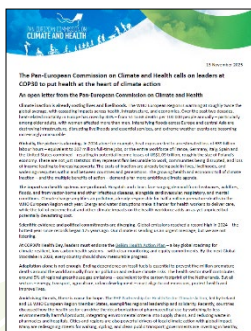
European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health

29 September–2 October 2025, Hamburg, Germany

The [14th European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health](#) brought together global experts to advance integrated approaches to human, animal and environmental health. Through sequential sessions, the track explored One Health theory, methods, evidence of effectiveness and practical operationalization. Key discussions addressed pandemic prevention, climate change, biodiversity loss and antimicrobial resistance, supported by case studies from Africa, Europe and other regions. Workshops and panels highlighted return on investment, the limited environment and health component in the economic argument for One Health, early warning systems, policy development and capacity building. Contributions from leading institutions, including WHO, strengthened links between research, policy and practice, reinforcing One Health as a cornerstone for addressing complex global health challenges.

Third hearing of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health

2 October 2025, virtual



The third [hearing](#) of the [Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#) brought the discussion from evidence to actionable pathways. Experts and policy-makers explored strategies to mobilize political will, strengthen governance and implement climate and health policies, emphasizing the need for resilient health systems and communities to safeguard well-being. As a result, the Commission issued an [open letter](#) urging leaders at the 30th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) to place health at the centre of climate action. The letter emphasizes the urgent health risks of climate change and calls for climate-resilient health systems, cross-sector collaboration and policies that deliver health co-benefits.



25th International Walk21 Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities

6–10 October 2025, Tirana, Albania

The [25th International Walk21 Conference](#) was hosted by the Municipality of Tirana, Albania, in partnership with the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* [German Corporation for International Cooperation] and the Walk21 Foundation. Together with experts from across the Balkans, Europe and around the globe, this event explored how to develop and implement walking policies and programmes that deliver streets and public space where communities enjoy spending time walking. The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)/EHP Partnership on Healthy Active Mobility representatives presented their work on advancing the implementation of the Pan-European Master Plan on [Walking](#) and [Cycling Promotion](#).

World Health Summit 2025 – “Taking Responsibility for Health in a Fragmenting World”

12–14 October 2025, Berlin, Germany



Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, addressing participants at the Summit. ©WHO.

The World Health Summit is a global platform that brings together science, policy, civil society and the private sector to drive collaborative and innovative solutions to today's major health challenges. Its flagship annual event, held in Berlin, convenes leaders and experts to shape the future of global health. At the Summit, the WHO Regional Director for Europe contributed as a keynote and panel speaker across

key sessions on [next-generation health systems](#), [women's health](#), European health-care resilience and trustworthy digital futures. More than 4000 on-site participants underscored the importance of cross-sector collaboration, evidence-based dialogue and shared responsibility in advancing innovative solutions to today's most pressing health challenges. Check out the Summit [report](#) for more details.

International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2025 – “No Safe Level: Act Now to End Lead Exposure”

19–25 October 2025, virtual

The [13th International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week](#), an annual campaign organized by WHO, focused on the urgent need to protect children from lead exposure; a [threat with no safe level](#). The campaign highlighted that while progress has been made – through the ban on leaded petrol and stronger regulations on lead in paint – children continue to face risks in homes, schools and playgrounds. Advocacy and technical materials supported campaigners worldwide, helping them organize events, raise awareness and showcase local actions during this global week of action.



Twenty-third session of THE PEP Steering Committee

22–24 October 2025, Geneva, Switzerland

The [23rd meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee](#) brought together representatives from WHO/Europe and UNECE Member States and key stakeholders. The session featured a symposium, “Shifting Gears”, which explored how the private sector contributes to promoting clean, healthy and active mobility across the pan-European region. The Committee reviewed the [Strategy on Transport, Health and Environment](#) and discussed updates from six [THE PEP Partnerships](#), with a focus on child-friendly mobility, the [Health economic assessment tool for walking and cycling](#), and active mobility jobs. WHO launched its policy brief [Promoting mental health through cycling and walking](#) alongside new [communication materials](#).

High-level technical briefing on climate and health

28 October 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark

In the context of the work of the independent Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health, the WHO Regional Office for Europe hosted a high-level technical briefing during the 75th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe. The purpose of the session was to present the outcomes of the Commission’s expert hearings and engage heads of delegations in an interactive discussion on the most useful directions that the “Call to Action” – to be released by the Commission in 2026 – should take. The technical briefing tackled several topics including entry points for political action, climate-health national priorities and challenges to action.

75th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

28–30 October 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark

The 53 Member States of the WHO European Region adopted the [second European Programme of Work 2026–2030 \(EPW2\)](#) at the [75th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe](#). The new 5-year Programme is a bold, action-oriented roadmap to build healthier, fairer and more resilient societies across the Region by the end of the decade. Environment and health, especially climate change, was recognized as one of WHO/Europe’s four core pillars, marking an important milestone and reaffirming Member States’ commitment under the [Budapest Declaration](#).

Country consultation on environment and health professional profiles and competency framework

29 October 2025, virtual

WHO ECEH in consultation with experts, Member States and stakeholders, is leading a project to develop the updated environment and health professional profiles and competency framework. This will enable Member States to assess current needs in their environment and health workforce, including core areas, functions, competencies and skills, and to integrate up-to-date environment and health services into workforce planning.

The consultation focused on revising the competency framework and is supported by a Delphi study led by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Public Health Leadership and Workforce Development.

The updated and fully employable competency framework will soon be released. Stay tuned for its launch.

Pandemic Fund and One Health in central Asia: launching the regional programme in Tajikistan

29–31 October 2025, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

The regional programme “One Health for Pandemic Prevention, Food Systems Resilience, and Ecosystem Health in Central Asia” was officially launched alongside the first meeting of the Regional One Health Coordination Council in Tajikistan. Hosted by the Government of Tajikistan and co-organized by the World Bank, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia and the Quadripartite organizations (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA), the event marked a major milestone in advancing the One Health agenda in the region.

The meeting convened high-level decision-makers, technical experts and regional leaders to consolidate political momentum, strengthen stakeholder ownership, mobilize co-financing for programme implementation and foster cross-border collaboration. A dedicated scientific conference complemented the high-level discussions, providing a platform to share evidence, innovative research and best practices on pandemic prevention, food system resilience and ecosystem health, while linking central Asia to global One Health expertise.



International One Health Conference

5–6 November 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark

The Danish Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, in collaboration with WHO/Europe, hosted an international [One Health Conference](#) as part of Denmark's EU Council Presidency. The event brought together around 200 participants, including EU policy-makers and experts. Key discussions focused on food safety and environmental pollutants, antimicrobial resistance and zoonotic diseases, reinforcing the importance of coordinated action across the human, animal and environmental health sectors. The conference resulted in a set of a recommendations for policy-makers.



Photo: participants at the international One Health Conference. © WHO.



COP30

10–21 November 2025, Belém, Brazil

WHO played a central role at [COP30](#) in advancing the global agenda linking climate and health.

A key milestone was [Health Day](#) on 13 November, where ministers and leaders convened for a high-level Ministerial Health Plenary to adopt the [Belém Health Action Plan for the Adaptation of the Health Sector to Climate Change](#), followed by a high-level round table on accelerating support and implementation. Throughout the conference, WHO and partners hosted the [Health Pavilion](#), bringing together experts, civil society and frontline voices to showcase solutions that place health at the centre of climate action.

World Toilet Day

19 November 2025, virtual



[World Toilet Day](#) highlights the critical role of sanitation in protecting health and the environment. Around the globe, billions still lack access to safe toilets, with women, girls and the poorest most affected. Aging infrastructure, underinvestment and climate change are increasing pressure on sanitation systems. The campaign encourages action and awareness, and provides [resources](#), including factsheets, kits, animations and social media assets.

POLIS Conference 2025

26–27 November 2025, Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the)

The annual [POLIS Conference](#) 2025 gathered over 1000 mobility leaders, policy-makers, researchers and innovators. The programme featured plenary sessions, more than 30 breakout sessions and site visits on topics including decarbonization, data governance, public transport, freight, safety and social equity, bringing together perspectives from cities, regions, research and industry. The Head of WHO ECEH, Ms Francesca Racioppi, took part in the high-level panel debate “Happy if Healthy: Mobility as a Mood” and highlighted the outcomes of the [#LetsGetMoving!](#) campaign and the recent publication [Promoting mental health through cycling and walking](#) (further details are available in the Latest publications section). Together with the other panellists (see photo below), the discussion highlighted how sustainable transport systems, active travel modes and equitable urban design can improve physical and mental well-being, reduce pollution-related health risks and enhance overall quality of life in cities. For more insights from the Conference discussions, explore the [presentations](#).



Photo: from left to right: Francesca Racioppi, Head of Office, WHO ECEH; Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director, Health and Environment Alliance; Christian Horemans, Expert, International Affairs, Union Nationale des Mutualités Libres, Belgium; Raoul Schmidt-Lamontain, Deputy Mayor for Climate, Environment and Mobility, City of Heidelberg, Germany; and Senna Maatoug, Deputy Mayor for Energy, Climate and Mobility, City of Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the). © POLIS / Michiel Ton.

30th annual meeting of the Regions for Health Network – “Better health begins in the regions: building bridges, creating solutions”

26–28 November 2025, St Pölten, Austria

The [meeting](#) brought together regional leaders, policy-makers and experts from across the WHO European Region. Participants reflected on more than three decades of Regions for Health Network partnership while helping shape a shared vision for stronger regional health governance, aligned with the EPW2. Discussions showcased regions as innovation hubs, with practical examples spanning healthy ageing, prevention and integrated care, cross-border public health, digital transformation, and the integration of health and social services. Through interactive sessions, peer learning and site visits, the meeting strengthened the collective voice of regions and reaffirmed their central role in advancing equitable, people-centred health and well-being across the Region.



Fifth EU Clean Air Forum

1–2 December 2025, Bonn, Germany

The [Fifth EU Clean Air Forum](#), organized by the European Commission and hosted by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, focused on evaluating the [National Emission reduction Commitments Directive](#) and the ongoing transposition of the revised [Ambient Air Quality Directive](#). Robb Butler, WHO Special Representative for Climate and Health, participated in a panel discussing strategies to improve communication on clean air and health. The key takeaway: while the science is clear and the message technical, political will remains limited, underscoring the need for a communication strategy as robust as the data.



Photo: Robb Butler, WHO Special Representative for Climate and Health, WHO/Europe, speaking at the panel discussion. © WHO.

Special Consultation with the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health

3 December 2025, virtual

A [special consultation](#) with leading experts was held to review evidence and country experiences and to shape final recommendations for accelerated action on health and climate, to be presented at the World Health Assembly in May 2026. The consultation brought together cities, regions and their networks from across the Region, including Bologna, Italy; Cork, Ireland; Freiburg, Germany; İzmir, Türkiye; London, United Kingdom; Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the); and Western Greece, to share local insights, priorities and practical action and experiences at the intersection of climate and health. The key takeaway was clear: by acting locally and learning together, climate action can be transformed into better health outcomes for every community. The [next special consultation](#) will take place on 19 January 2026.



15th meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) Bureau

10 December 2025, virtual

The meeting of the EHTF Bureau brought together representatives from 29 Member States and five stakeholder organizations to review progress on the national implementation of the [Budapest Declaration](#). Participants discussed the operationalization of the 2026–2027 EHTF Programme of Work, ensuring alignment with [EPW2](#), and initiated preparations for the next full EHTF meeting in 2026. Country updates were shared by Czechia, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland and Tajikistan. The meeting also reviewed progress across the six [EHP Partnerships](#), including the presentation of the Partnerships [video](#) and the [annual work summary](#).

ONE-Bridge: European One Health Conference, Bridging Human, Animal, and Environmental Health

8–11 December 2025, Patras, Greece

The [ONE-Bridge in Health Conference](#) brought together leading experts, policy-makers, researchers and students to advance the One Health approach; highlighting the deep interconnections between human, animal and environmental health. Over 4 days, the conference addressed major global challenges including zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, climate change, migration and digital innovation. Through keynote lectures, scientific sessions, workshops and policy panels, of which WHO contributed to, participants explored integrated surveillance, ethical dimensions, wastewater monitoring, artificial intelligence-driven health tools and resilience strategies. The conference emphasized cross-sector collaboration, evidence-based policy and innovation as essential pillars for protecting public health and building a sustainable, resilient future across Europe.



5. LATEST PUBLICATIONS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING MATERIALS

Discover the latest WHO publications and capacity-building materials in the field of environment and health, as listed below.

2026 calendar: 12 months and more than 100 reasons to walk and cycle more



To support planning for 2026 and to inspire more walking and cycling you are warmly invited to download a [calendar](#), available as desk and wall versions. Developed by the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, the calendar is part of the “Let’s Get Moving! 100 Reasons to Walk and Cycle More” campaign under THE PEP, jointly serviced by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and UNECE.

Promoting mental health through cycling and walking: a win-win approach for health and sustainability



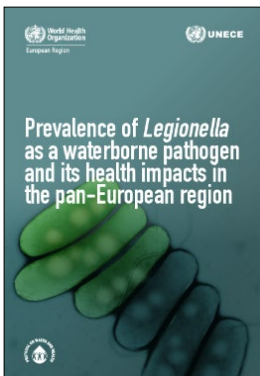
This [publication](#) addresses the triple challenge of reducing physical inactivity, promoting mental health and providing healthy and sustainable mobility options, and draws on review studies and the growing body of evidence on the impacts of active mobility across a wide range of mental health conditions in all age groups. It also brings together evidence-based, practical tips and good-practice project examples to promote further investments into active mobility as well as continued research into its effects on mental health, helping to address the substantial burden of mental ill-health and physical inactivity across Europe.

Small-scale sanitation and drinking-water supply systems: driving country action towards safer services



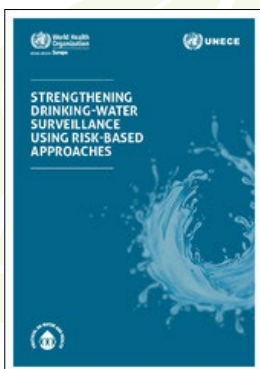
This [report](#) draws on national reports, surveys and interviews, showcasing country actions that are progressively addressing challenges related to small-scale sanitation and drinking-water supply systems. Action on sanitation lags behind action on drinking-water. Many activities reported strengthen the evidence base – a crucial step for guiding targeted improvement action. Country actions focus on raising awareness, building capacity and establishing safe management practices, while there is less action on other areas – such as strengthening regulations, improving data management, strategic planning and financing. These are, however, critical to the longer-term sustainability and resilience of small-scale systems. Through the [Protocol on Water and Health](#), continued action can be inspired by the examples and success factors presented.

Prevalence of *Legionella* as a waterborne pathogen and its health impacts in the pan-European region



This [publication](#) takes stock of the available regional evidence on the environmental prevalence and disease burden of *Legionella*. The situation assessment confirms that prevention and control of *Legionella* require concerted action to raise awareness, strengthen national regulatory frameworks, and enhance capacities in laboratory diagnostics, outbreak detection and management.

Training package: strengthening drinking-water surveillance using risk-based approaches



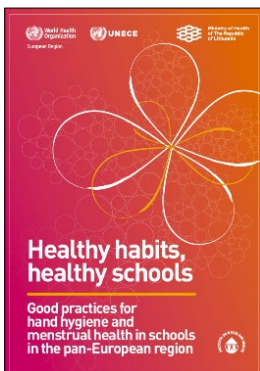
The framework for safe drinking-water recommended by the WHO [Guidelines for drinking-water quality](#) promotes a risk-based preventive management approach to ensure safety of drinking-water. Independent drinking-water surveillance is one of the core components of this framework and is an essential public health function. To be effective, drinking-water surveillance needs to be aligned with risk-based principles, including the prioritization of monitoring parameters and surveillance efforts based on water safety plan outcomes. This [training package](#) introduces the principles and practice of risk-based drinking-water quality surveillance. It is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and practical skills needed to develop and implement risk-based surveillance programmes tailored to local contexts.

Improving quality of care through water, sanitation and hygiene services: highlights and progress in the pan-European region



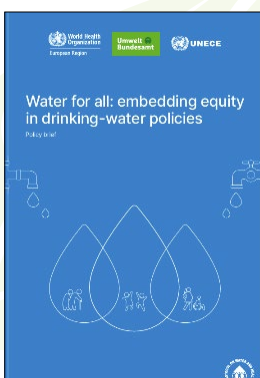
This [report](#) reviews the status of WASH services in health-care facilities across the pan-European region, drawing on national assessments, surveys and global monitoring data. It aims to inform and inspire health-care professionals, policy-makers and partners to accelerate progress towards universal access to safe and sustainable WASH services in health-care facilities. Many countries have made progress, including in strengthening national standards, undertaking baseline assessments and adopting risk-based approaches. Improvements in surveillance, integration of WASH into health strategies and cross-sectoral coordination are also emerging. However, disparities in service coverage persist – particularly in rural and primary care settings – alongside gaps in infrastructure, governance and financing.

Healthy habits, healthy schools: good practices for hand hygiene and menstrual health in schools in the pan-European region



This [publication](#) showcases good practices in promoting hand hygiene and menstrual health in educational settings from across the pan-European region, illustrating how political commitment and international frameworks can be translated into concrete improvements. By sharing these experiences, it seeks to inspire governments, policy-makers, education and public health professionals, schools and communities to advance efforts towards ensuring an enabling environment for hand hygiene and menstrual health in every school, and for all.

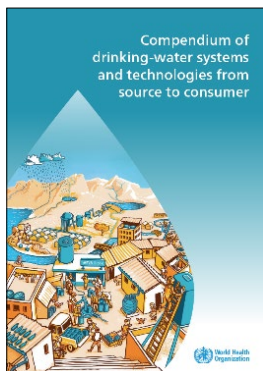
Water for all: embedding equity in drinking-water policies: policy brief



Closing equity gaps in access to drinking-water is a prerequisite for health and dignity. The provision of equitable access contributes to livelihoods and to building resilient and healthy communities. However, this is an ongoing and complex challenge in the pan-European region, requiring cross-sectoral cooperation. This [policy brief](#) highlights useful tools and best practices to support countries in their efforts to embed equity in drinking-water policies. It also outlines remaining challenges and provides an overview of the status of equitable access in the region.

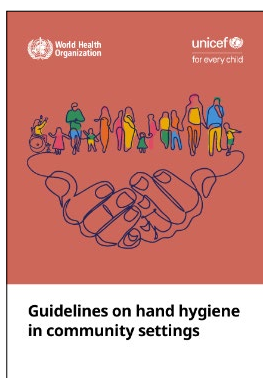


Compendium of drinking-water systems and technologies from source to consumer



By consolidating technical and operational knowledge and good practices, this [Compendium](#) enables evidence-based decision-making and supports the selection of solutions that are appropriate to local conditions, resources and water quality challenges. It links technology choice to health targets and management approaches, reinforcing the progressive implementation of [WHO's Framework for safe drinking-water](#). Cross-cutting themes such as risk-based management and monitoring, life-cycle considerations, inclusion and strengthening resilience are addressed to promote sustainable and equitable services. As a companion to WHO's 2024 [Guidelines for drinking-water quality: small water supplies](#) and [Sanitary inspection packages](#), the Compendium facilitates planning, stakeholder engagement and capacity development towards safely managed drinking-water services for all.

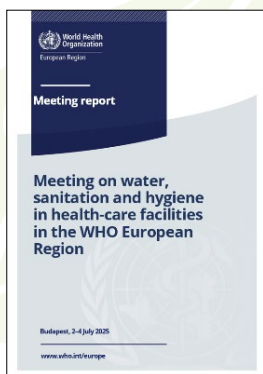
Guidelines on hand hygiene in community settings



These [Guidelines](#) are concerned with the practice of hand hygiene to protect community health outcomes, in particular, the reduction of diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections. The focus is on hand hygiene in non-health care settings, collectively referred to as community settings. Community settings are defined as those where health care is not routinely delivered. They include three broad domains: domestic (households), public and institutional settings.

The evidence that supports this new guidance, is included in the BMJ Global Health [supplement](#).

Meeting report: meeting on water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities in the WHO European Region: Budapest, 2–4 July 2025



The WHO Regional Office for Europe, together with Hungary's Ministry of Interior and its National Centre for Public Health and Pharmacy, convened a regional meeting on WASH in health-care facilities in Budapest, Hungary, on 2–4 July 2025. The meeting brought together policy-makers and experts to share experiences, strengthen leadership and identify actions to advance WASH implementation across the WHO European Region. Discussions focused on translating international commitments into national action, improving monitoring and indicators, integrating WASH within health programmes and promoting enabling environments for sustainable services. Explore the full [report](#) for more details and insights.



Meeting report: workshop on safe sanitation for public health protection in central Asia, Astana, 3–4 June 2025



This [workshop](#) convened national and regional stakeholders to strengthen understanding and capacity for safely managed sanitation. Participants explored the health and environmental rationale for sanitation, reviewed the provisions of the [WHO Guidelines on sanitation and health](#), and applied the sanitation safety planning approach. The workshop emphasized climate-resilient systems, equity and intersectoral collaboration, and supported dialogue on setting national sanitation targets under the Protocol on Water and Health. Country teams from central Asia discussed priority actions to close infrastructure and service gaps and improve regulations and monitoring schemes, including a focus on rural and vulnerable populations. The event reinforced sanitation as a public health priority and a strategic investment in resilience, contributing to regional efforts

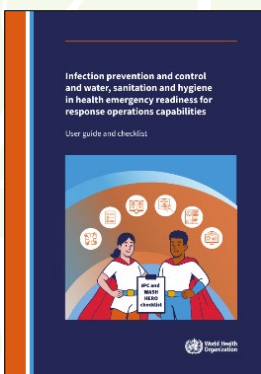
to align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Meeting report: workshop on wastewater and environmental surveillance for public health in central Asia: Astana, June 2025



This [workshop](#) convened national and regional stakeholders to advance wastewater and environmental surveillance (WES) as a strategic public health tool. WES enables the early detection of pathogens and supports outbreak preparedness by complementing clinical surveillance with population-level insights. Participants explored the health and environmental rationale for WES, shared country experiences and applied WHO's draft multi-pathogen prioritization framework. The workshop highlighted persistent challenges in sanitation infrastructure, laboratory capacity and governance, particularly in rural areas, while identifying opportunities for modernization, intersectoral coordination and regional collaboration.

Infection prevention and control and water, sanitation and hygiene in health emergencies readiness for response operations capabilities: user guide and checklist



This [assessment](#) aims to strengthen national and subnational infection prevention and control and WASH operational readiness for responding to a public health threat or infectious disease outbreaks by evaluating existing capabilities, identifying gaps and guiding strategic improvements. Its structure was based on the WHO [Framework and toolkit for infection prevention and control in outbreak preparedness, readiness and response at the national level](#) and the user of this checklist should be familiar with the Framework's contents.



Measuring greenhouse gas emissions in health systems



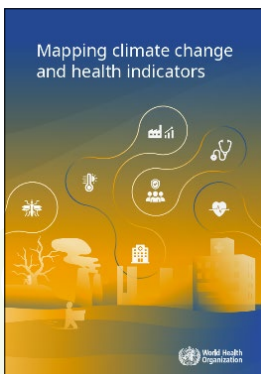
This [document](#) has two aims. First, it defines a common approach for health system emissions measurement that is aligned with international standards and best practice. Second, it sets out how health systems can develop the necessary internal capabilities to measure their emissions consistently and effectively over time.

Health at the heart of national adaptation planning: a global review of national adaptation plans and health national adaptation plans



To effectively address growing health challenges posed by climate change, health considerations must be systematically integrated into broader national climate adaptation strategies. This [review](#) examines national adaptation plans and health national adaptation plans to assess how health considerations are integrated into climate adaptation planning, identify gaps and good practices, and highlight opportunities to strengthen health resilience to climate change.

Mapping climate change and health indicators



This [review](#) sheds light on how countries are measuring the health impacts of climate change. It examines the indicators 22 countries – spanning all WHO regions – are using from 15 vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and 16 health national adaptation plans.



Highlights of the fifteenth meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force



These [highlights](#) capture key outcomes from the [fifteenth meeting of the EHTF](#), which was held virtually on 17 June 2025, and brought together nearly 100 participants from 38 countries and 12 stakeholder organizations. The meeting provided a platform to share progress on the implementation of the Budapest commitments – including [EHP Partnerships](#) work – align priorities and guide the next phase of regional environment and health action. EHTF elected a [new Bureau](#) and welcomed [new stakeholder organizations](#), reinforcing EHTF's inclusive and dynamic approach to governance.

Health risks of air pollution in Europe: HRAPIE-2 project: updated guidance on concentration–response functions for health risk assessment of air pollution in the WHO European Region



This [document](#) updates the 2013 *Health risks of air pollution in Europe* report and provides up-to-date guidance on concentration–response functions and associated information for key pollutants (particulate matter, ozone and nitrogen dioxide). This publication will help produce more comprehensive assessments of the health effects of different exposure durations. Developed by WHO ECEH with expert input and EU co-funding, this document supports WHO frameworks as well as broader UN and EU agendas, including the [Budapest Declaration](#) and the [WHO road map on air pollution](#).

Understanding the health and tourism nexus



This [report](#) explores the multifaceted nexus between health and tourism within the WHO European Region, emphasizing the importance of sustainable tourism management for public health. It highlights the significant impacts of the coronavirus disease pandemic on tourism economies and health systems, underscoring the need for resilience, sustainability and inclusivity in future tourism development. Also, the report discusses how tourism can promote health and well-being through stress reduction, physical activity and health tourism, while also addressing health risks such as infectious diseases, injuries and violence.

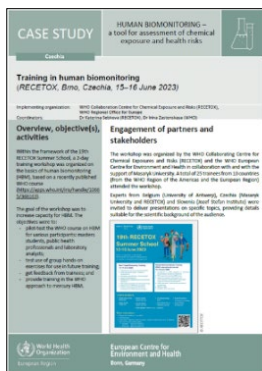


Co-benefits of climate mitigation action for health in the WHO European Region: policy brief



Climate change is a major threat to public health globally, and the WHO European Region is experiencing the fastest increase in temperatures, which rose at an average rate of about 0.5 °C per decade between 1991 and 2021. There is widespread recognition that protection and improvement of health are one of the strongest arguments for action on climate change and sustainable development. Many policies for addressing the climate crisis also have major near-term co-benefits for health. This [brief](#) calls for increased advocacy and support for mitigation policies and actions, not only to combat climate change but also to improve the health of populations in the European Region.

Case study: training in human biomonitoring



This [case study](#) highlights a WHO-led training workshop on human biomonitoring organized by the WHO Collaborating Centre the Research Centre for Toxic Compounds in the Environment in collaboration with WHO/Europe. Delivered as part of the Centre's Summer School, the workshop strengthened national capacity to assess chemical exposure and related health risks by piloting the WHO human biomonitoring course, combining expert lectures with practical exercises and fostering international knowledge exchange. The initiative demonstrated the value of human biomonitoring as a key tool for evidence-based chemical risk management and public health decision-making.

Case study: towards establishing a poison centre in the Republic of Moldova



This [case study](#) describes WHO-supported efforts to establish a poison centre in the Republic of Moldova, led by the National Agency of Public Health in collaboration with WHO/Europe. Through national consultations, capacity assessments, expert training and study visits to established poison centres in other countries, the initiative helped define a national model and build consensus for the creation of a poison centre. The experience demonstrates an effective, stepwise approach to strengthening chemical safety, emergency preparedness and public health response capacity.



Case study: multi-country training workshop: initial steps in establishing a poison centre



This [case study](#) presents a WHO-led multi-country training workshop held in Montenegro to support initial steps in establishing poison centres. The workshop brought together health ministry representatives from six countries and international experts to share guidance, practical experience and best practices on the organization, roles and functions of poison centres. The initiative strengthened regional cooperation, improved understanding of poison centre requirements and identified priority areas for further WHO support, including toxicological laboratories, antidote availability and sustainable financing. The experience highlights the value of step-by-step, collaborative approaches to strengthening chemical safety and emergency preparedness in countries with limited resources.

Throwing away our health: the impact of solid waste on human health – evidence, knowledge gaps and health sector responses



This [document](#) summarizes current knowledge on the links between solid waste and human health, focusing on municipal solid waste. It covers definitions of waste types, management practices and trends, and examines associated hazards, exposure pathways and affected populations. The document reviews available epidemiological evidence and highlights research gaps. It underscores the need for sustainable, integrated waste management, stronger governance and active engagement from the health sector to reduce health risks and inform evidence-based policy and practice.



6. EHP PARTNERSHIPS CORNER

The [EHP Partnerships](#) is a policy mechanism within the EHP to accelerate national and international implementation of the commitments made under the [Budapest Declaration and its Roadmap](#). The EHP Partnerships bring together countries and partners with a shared interest in a specific thematic area to collaborate on a voluntary basis and leverage progress across the WHO European Region.



- To learn more about each Partnership, explore the [leaflets](#).
- Check out the [annual summary](#) of the EHP Partnerships, highlighting key activities and progress between the two latest EHTF meetings.
- For a cinematic look at the latest updates, watch the [video](#) “From Utrecht to Bonn”, which showcases the EHP Partnerships’ journey over the past year, highlighting milestones and progress towards implementing the [Budapest commitments](#).

Driving climate action in health systems



The [EHP Partnership on Health Sector Climate Action](#) held its deep-dive webinar on 4 November 2025, exploring how countries are reducing the climate impact of anaesthetic gases, advancing sustainable pharmaceutical procurement and driving innovation in waste reduction, circularity and enabling environments for change. The discussion brought together professionals from clinical care, pharmaceutical management, sustainability, procurement and supply chains, hospital administration, and research and innovation.



Advancing human biomonitoring initiatives

On 4–6 November 2026, the third meeting of the [EHP Partnership on Human Biomonitoring](#) took place in Estonia. Led by Germany and co-led by Georgia, the Partnership brings together 22 Member States to advance human biomonitoring activities and strengthen national

programmes. On 5–6 November 2026, WHO hosted a hands-on training workshop on human biomonitoring fundamentals for professionals from Estonia and other member countries, combining expert-led lectures with practical exercises.

Mapping synergies between EHP Partnerships and the Protocol on Water and Health

At the [seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health](#), the National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy of Hungary, with support from the WHO Regional Office for Europe, hosted a side event on advancing the regional environment and health agenda by mapping synergies between the EHP Partnerships and the Protocol on Water and Health.

The event showcased the added value of the EHP Partnerships, explored synergies with the Protocol and promoted WASH as a key domain for joint action, while sharing country-level perspectives and recommendations to strengthen cooperation.

The EHP Partnerships on Risk Reduction in the School Environment, Health Sector Climate Action and Youth joined forces in the discussions, highlighting the value of coordinated action across priority themes.



Photo: representatives of the side event “Advancing the regional environment and health agenda: mapping synergies between EHP Partnerships and the Protocol on Water and Health”. © WHO.



New Toxicological Information Centre enhances chemical safety in the Republic of Moldova

The Republic of Moldova has inaugurated its new Poison Information Centre, marking a significant milestone in strengthening national capacities in chemical safety, public health risk management and poisoning surveillance. The initiative was implemented under the leadership of the National Agency for Public Health, with support from WHO and the Pandemic Fund, and in close collaboration with the EHP Partnership on Poison Centres.

The Centre represents a key step toward strengthening toxicovigilance, preparedness for chemical incidents and inter-institutional coordination. It will enhance the surveillance and reporting of poisoning events, support evidence-based decision-making, and improve coordinated responses across relevant sectors and institutions.

Key achievements to date include:

- the expansion of national expertise in WHO policies and tools related to chemical management, poisonings and emergency preparedness;
- an improved understanding of the role and added value of poison centres;
- the development of a national vision and operational model for a Poison Information Centre;
- structured discussions on existing gaps and needs; and
- the achievement of national consensus on the establishment of the Centre, laying a solid foundation for strengthened chemical safety in the country.

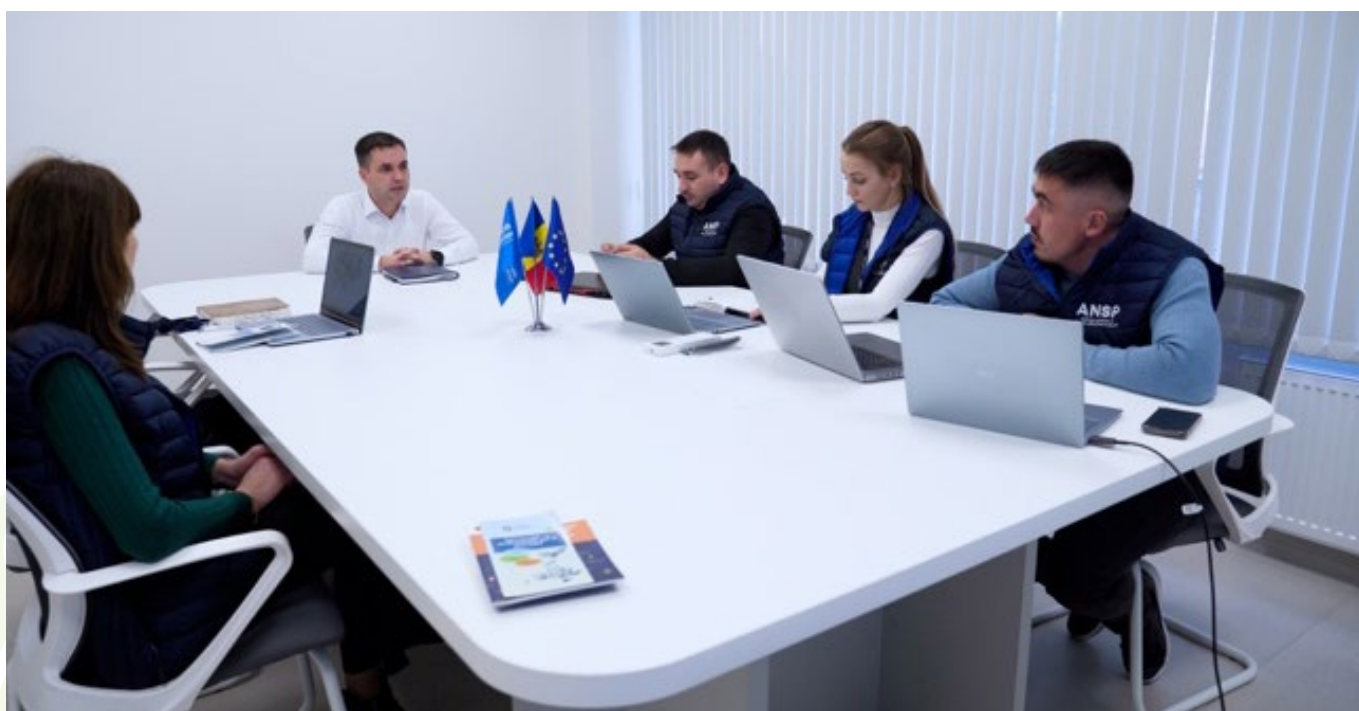


Photo: the team behind the Republic of Moldova's strengthened toxicology and preparedness capacity. © WHO.



Implementation has been led by the National Agency for Public Health, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, in close cooperation with the WHO ECEH and the WHO Country Office in the Republic of Moldova.

The establishment process brought together key national stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, relevant line ministries, public health authorities, clinical institutions with toxicology expertise – particularly the Institute of Mother and Child and Sfânta Treime Clinical Municipal Hospital – as well as emergency and civil protection services, environmental and food safety authorities, academic and research institutions, and international partners. Experts in public health surveillance, clinical toxicology, laboratory services, emergency response and environmental health jointly

assessed national needs and existing capacities, providing the technical basis for the Centre's operationalization and its integration into national health, emergency response and chemical safety systems.

The Toxicological Information Centre is designed to support evidence-based public health action, strengthen poisoning surveillance and reporting, facilitate effective intersectoral coordination and contribute to the implementation of international commitments related to chemical safety and the protection of population health.

A video of the Toxicological Information Centre is available [here](#) and may be of particular interest to Romanian-speaking audiences.



7. NEWS FROM EHP STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

Our dedicated partners and environment and health stakeholders have been working tirelessly to create a positive impact. Below you will find a selection of their latest activities.

Climate inaction is claiming millions of lives every year, warns a new Lancet Countdown report

The 2025 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: climate change action offers a lifeline, produced in collaboration with WHO, finds that 12 of 20 key indicators tracking health threats have reached record levels, showing how climate inaction is costing lives, straining health systems and undermining economies. Check the key findings available on the WHO [website](#).

Small Countries Initiative impact report 2021–2024: four years of progress



The [Small Countries Initiative](#) (SCI), established in 2013, serves as a collaborative platform for 12 Member States in the WHO European Region, each with populations under 2 million. This new WHO [report](#) reviews the SCI's progress and impact from 2021 to 2024, assessed through high-level meetings of the SCI and the implementation of the [EPW2](#) and the [Roadmap towards better health in small countries in the WHO European Region 2022–2025](#).

The per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) policy landscape across Europe



A Health and Environment Alliance-commissioned [report](#) finds uneven protection from PFAS pollution across the EU. While a few countries have national or regional plans, most rely on insufficient EU rules. These “forever chemicals” are linked to serious health harms and contaminate 23 000 sites, affecting the drinking water of 12.5 million Europeans. The report calls for stronger, science-based EU and national action, including a robust EU-wide PFAS restriction and tighter controls across chemicals, pesticides and pharmaceuticals. The preface and executive summary are also available in [Italian](#), [French](#), [Polish](#) and [Dutch](#).



Chemical pollution is driving a men's health crisis



A new Health and Environment Alliance [report](#) warns that chemical pollution is driving a growing men's health crisis in Europe. Rising rates of prostate and testicular cancer and male infertility are increasingly linked to exposure to phthalates, PFAS, pesticides and microplastics, with evidence showing that even preconception exposure can harm future generations. The combined health and economic cost exceeds €15 billion annually.

Environmental Outlook on the Triple Planetary Crisis

The [Environmental Outlook on the Triple Planetary Crisis](#), developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, examines in detail the interlocking trends and drivers of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; projects how they will evolve through to the mid-century; and examines policy synergies and trade-offs. It also provides a roadmap to help governments tackle these challenges in a more integrated manner. The fifth chapter of the Environmental Outlook presents a first-of-its-kind stocktake of how 10 countries – Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Peru and Uganda – address the triple planetary crisis in their national reports.

EU sets ambitious emission reduction targets ahead of COP30

In November 2025, at the recent EU [Environment Council](#) held ahead of COP30, EU environment ministers agreed on the Council's position (their "general approach") on the amendment to the European climate law, which sets a binding target for the EU to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2040. The agreement is a key step in the EU's path towards achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

100 countries committed to climate action for health

With 100 UN Member States committing to climate and health action and sharing knowledge, the [Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health](#) (ATACH) is working towards securing and greening the future of global health. ATACH is a voluntary network of countries, areas and partners working to share knowledge, experiences, lessons learned and tools for members to develop climate-resilient, sustainable and low-carbon health systems at the country level.

The [EHP Partnership's for Health Sector Climate Action](#) work is closely aligned with the ATACH and directly supports the implementation of major regional and global commitments; notably the [Budapest Declaration](#), the [World Health Assembly resolution on climate change and health](#), and the [Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health](#).



8. UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Listed below are the upcoming events and opportunities to look forward to.

[Special Consultation with the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#) (19 January 2026, virtual).

10th Partners Meeting of the European Climate and Health Observatory (27–28 January 2026, Bonn, Germany).

[Workshop on wastewater and environmental surveillance for public health in western Balkan countries](#) (10–12 March 2026, Belgrade, Serbia).

[World Health Day](#) (7 April 2026, virtual).

29th meeting of the Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution within the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (28–29 April 2026, virtual).

[Expert Group on Climate Change under the Protocol on Water and Health](#) (11–12 May 2026, Geneva, Switzerland).

Launch of the Call to Action of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health (17 May 2026, Geneva).

[Transport Research Arena Conference “Re-Generation in Transport”](#) (18–21 May 2026, Budapest, Hungary).

Bonn Dialogue on Menstrual Health (28 May 2026, virtual).

16th meeting of the EHTF Bureau (spring 2026, virtual).

Launch of the WHO Heat-Health Action Plan Guidance: second edition (before summer 2026).

[World Environment Day](#) (5 June 2026, virtual).

64th sessions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [Subsidiary Body for Implementation](#) and [Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice](#) (8–18 June 2026, Bonn, Germany).



[17th conference of the European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity](#) (8–10 September 2026, Ljubljana, Slovenia).

[World Health Summit](#) (11–13 October 2026, Berlin, Germany).

[17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (19–30 October 2026, Yerevan, Armenia).

[31st meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (9–20 November 2026, Antalya, Türkiye (hosted by Türkiye with Australia leading negotiations)).

[UN 2026 Water Conference](#) (2–4 December 2026, United Arab Emirates).







9. CONTACT US

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To keep up with WHO/Europe on social media, you can follow them on the platforms below:

-  @who_europe
-  @WHORegionalOfficeforEurope
-  @WHOEurope
-  @whoeurope

To explore activities from WHO ECEH, check out the hashtag **#ECEHBonn**

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