



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH PROCESS



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROCESS NEWSLETTER

July–September 2025



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1. EDITORIAL



Extreme heat is breaking records around the world, with wildfires and poor air quality compounding the crisis, according to a [report](#) from the World Meteorological Organization; the United Nations (UN) scientific voice on weather.

In this record-breaking July, heatwaves especially impacted Finland and Sweden, which experienced unusually long spells of temperatures above 30 degrees Celsius. Southeast Europe also faced heatwaves and wildfire

activity, with Türkiye recording an extreme new national high of 50.5 degrees Celsius. Furthermore, heavy rains triggered flash [floods](#) across northeastern Romania.

These are just a few pressing examples showing why accelerating the implementation of the [Budapest commitments](#) is not just important. It is urgent.

This July–September newsletter shows how countries across the WHO European Region – and the partners working with them – are stepping up to face the big 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.



Photo: The [image](#) is of smoke from large wildfires that have been affecting Albania and Greece.



2. TOP STORY

Extreme weather events in Europe and central Asia are a health emergency – not just a climate issue



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The Region is experiencing record-breaking heatwaves, growing more intense and more deadly. These events are silent killers. Their toll is often hidden in death records as strokes, heart attacks or respiratory failure.

But the cause is clear.

The [Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#) has issued an [open letter](#) to the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region, which states "Climate change is no longer a distant threat. It is a public health crisis unfolding in real time".

- Heat-related deaths rose 30% in 20 years, with over 100 000 deaths in 2022–2023 alone.
- Climate change is fuelling the spread of diseases once rare in the Region.
- Hospitals are feeling the heat – from failing information technology systems to staff burnout.



Realizing the health potential of climate action: adaptation and mitigation opportunities in the WHO European Region



The Commission urges governments to act now: accelerate heat-health action plans, redefine economic progress to value health and sustainability, and invest in solutions that protect lives and livelihoods.

health benefits of thoughtfully designed and equitably implemented climate action.

The document is the second of a series of three short thematic briefs developed for the Commission, which has been convened by WHO/Europe to accelerate decisive climate action that protects and promotes health.

- Don't miss it! Check out the outcomes of the [Second hearing of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#) in the "[Recent events](#)" section.

More key evidence relevant to the opportunities and co-benefits of addressing climate change threats to human health in the WHO European Region through both adaptation and mitigation measures, can be found in this [document](#). It provides key messages about the multiple



3. COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

Lithuania made a strong mark in the “#LetsGetMoving! 100 Reasons to Walk and Cycle More” challenge

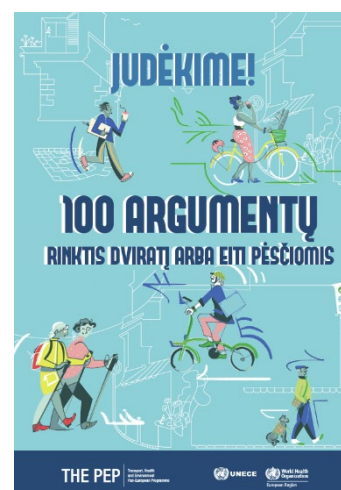
The WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), Bonn, Germany, received warm greetings from the [Institute of Hygiene](#) and the [WHO Country Office in Lithuania](#), who showcased the [campaign's launch and activities at national level](#).

To explore the [campaign materials developed by WHO/Europe](#), please see the list below:

- [Brochure](#): discover 100 evidence-based reasons to promote walking and cycling – for healthier people, cleaner environments and better urban living – supported by science and stories from across the WHO European Region. Available in English and Russian.
- A video is available in all four official WHO languages: [English](#), [French](#), [German](#) and [Russian](#).

- [Social media tiles](#) are available in English, French, German and Russian.

Those wishing to support the #LetsGetMoving campaign are encouraged to translate materials into national languages to ensure wider reach without language barriers. For further guidance, please contact the EHP Secretariat at euceh@who.int.



Roundtable on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in health-care facilities in Kazakhstan

On 1 July 2025, the [WHO Country Office in Kazakhstan](#), together with the Ministry of Health and the Ministries of Water Resources and Irrigation, and Ecology and Natural Resources, held a roundtable on the current state of WASH in health-care facilities. The event was part of an ongoing situational analysis of WASH, supported

by WHO ECEH under the [UN-to-UN Transfer Agreement](#) with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Next steps will include a review of the legal framework and expert interviews to assess the enabling environment for WASH in these facilities.



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Tajikistan advances implementation of Budapest commitments on climate and health

Tajikistan has taken concrete steps in advancing the [Budapest commitments](#) through strengthened action on climate and health. During a recent visit, WHO/Europe met with the Commissioner and the Chairman of the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management, to align national priorities with the [Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#). Discussions focused

on building climate-resilient health services, promoting multisectoral solutions, supporting the [WHO European Healthy Cities Network](#) and enhancing regional cooperation.

A visit to the [WHO-recognized National Reference Laboratory](#) showcased Tajikistan's significant progress in strengthening laboratory quality management.

Advancing One Health: Turkmenistan unites sectors for stronger health resilience

On 12 August 2025, Turkmenistan took another step towards a healthier, safer future by hosting its third national intersectoral meeting on One Health. The gathering, convened by the [WHO Country Office in Turkmenistan](#), brought together over 25 national institutions and international partners to connect the dots between human, animal and environmental health.

Participants looked back on progress made so far, shared hard-won lessons, and charted fresh priorities under the regional project on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. By fostering collaboration across sectors, the initiative is strengthening public health resilience and building a united front against future threats.

Ukraine advances climate health risk assessment

On 3 July 2025, the [WHO Country Office in Ukraine](#), in partnership with WHO ECEH, hosted a peer consultation to advance Ukraine's assessment of health risks and vulnerabilities linked to climate change. The meeting gathered national stakeholders and experts from the Ireland's Department of Health, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and the Public Health

Agency of Sweden, to exchange methodologies and explore the adaptation of international tools to Ukraine's context. This collaboration will accelerate the development of a tailored climate risk-assessment framework, contributing to proposals for a national climate adaptation programme.



Uzbekistan leads the way under the Protocol on Water and Health

Uzbekistan became the first central Asian country to ratify the UNECE–WHO/Europe [Protocol on Water and Health](#) in December 2023, joining the Protocol family as its 29th member and setting an inspiring example for the subregion.

In September, Tashkent hosted a technical multistakeholder workshop to kick off the target-setting process; the country's main legal obligation under the Protocol. The event brought together government authorities, experts, civil society and partners to shape Uzbekistan's next steps.

The workshop concluded with commitments to the target setting-process to be led by the Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiologic Wellbeing and Public Health of Uzbekistan, paving the way to the [Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health](#) (5–7 November 2025, Budapest, Hungary). For more about the seventh session, see the “Upcoming events and initiatives” section.



©Water Convention / Protocol on Water and Health



4. RECENT EVENTS

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

1–3 July 2025, Barcelona, Spain

The Partnership for Healthy Cities convened a workshop in Barcelona focused on two key interventions: urban heat reduction and air quality monitoring. The Partnership – a global network of 74 cities supported by WHO and Vital Strategies – helps cities implement policies to prevent noncommunicable diseases and injuries. Participants from 11 cities – Accra, Barcelona, Bogotá, Fortaleza, Kathmandu, Jakarta, New York City, Santiago, São Paulo, Seoul and Toronto – reviewed their 2025 work plans, shared experiences, and explored ways to strengthen public health policy action. Insights from the discussions will inform the activities of participating cities in 2025. The event was facilitated by WHO ECEH, which also supports WHO headquarter's technical involvement in the Partnership.

2–4 July 2025, Budapest, Hungary

A landmark [meeting on WASH in health-care facilities in the WHO European Region](#) was held under the [Protocol on Water and Health](#), organized by WHO ECEH in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and the National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy of Hungary. The event brought together 63 stakeholders from 12 countries and 13 organizations to share experiences, reinforce leadership, and promote safer, more resilient and equitable health systems – highlighting the crucial role of WASH in infection prevention and control, reducing antimicrobial resistance and ensuring quality of care. This meeting reaffirmed regional and global commitments on WASH in health-care facilities, captured the unprecedented political momentum at the international level and provided a platform to share best practices across the Region. Participants reflected on progress with regards to the recommended [eight practical steps](#) to achieve universal access to quality care, on key priorities and further support needs. The meeting outcomes will inform high-level fora at global and regional levels and guide future action under the Protocol on Water and Health. Highlights on the event can be found [here](#) and more will be shared in the upcoming meeting report.



Photo: Participants sharing inspiring moments during the meeting on WASH in health-care facilities in the WHO European Region

16 July 2025, virtual



The [Transatlantic dialogue on climate and health impacts in situations of vulnerability](#) was the fourth dialogue in a series of a joint initiative by WHO/Europe and the Pan American Health Organization. The dialogue focused on climate change and health equity, emphasizing that vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, older adults, ethnic minorities and people in flood-prone areas face disproportionate risks. Participants exchanged experiences on integrating equity into climate action, sharing successful interventions and discussing both common and region-specific challenges. The event fostered collaboration and generated ideas for actionable policy recommendations. Outcomes will inform a summary for policy-makers on advancing equity-oriented approaches to climate and health across both regions.



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17 July and 4 September 2025, virtual

WHO launched new [Health science and policy summaries on air quality, energy and health](#) (see “Latest publications and capacity-building materials” section) at its webinars in [July](#) and [September](#).

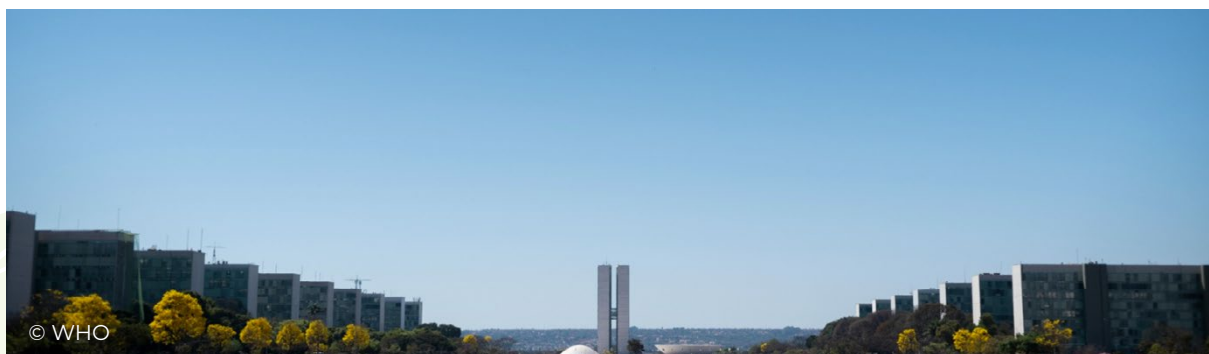
These summaries include crucial sectoral strategies for clean air and energy, climate mitigation, climate-resilient health systems and health protection, aligning with the global climate and health agendas, including the WHO’s [2025 Global Conference on Climate and Health](#) and the [30th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (COP30).

The summaries are developed through a multistakeholder consultation process that includes experts from WHO advisory groups as well as specialists from WHO collaborating centres, UN agencies as well as other experts from academia and civil society.

25 July 2025, virtual

A high-level [dialogue](#) with Mayor Anne Hidalgo of Paris, France, spotlighted how bold city policies can deliver cleaner air, climate resilience and healthier communities. Urban leaders and mayors worldwide were invited to draw inspiration from Paris’s transformative agenda – showcasing how cities can empower citizens, cut health inequalities and create healthier, more sustainable environments for all. Watch the recording [here](#).

29–31 July 2025, Brasilia, Brazil



The [2025 Global Conference on Climate and Health](#), hosted by the Government of Brazil, WHO and the Pan American Health Organization, brought together stakeholders to consolidate and share evidence on the implementation of health adaptation policies to climate change. The event highlighted the health co-benefits of ambitious and equitable climate actions across international, national and subnational levels. Special attention was given to health equity and social participation, recognized as key for advancing the health sector agenda and ensuring the success of COP30.



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The event also served as the annual in-person meeting of the [Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health](#) (ATACH), providing a key platform to emphasize the role of ambitious and equitable climate action in protecting health. During the ATACH plenary session, a delegate from Germany, representing both WHO/Europe and the [EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action](#), delivered an intervention highlighting regional and climate challenges – including increasing urbanization, a rapidly ageing population and intersecting vulnerabilities. The intervention also reflected on regional priorities as outlined in the [Budapest Declaration](#).

In addition, delegates from Germany shared remarks recognizing the valuable contributions of the ATACH task teams, positioning the EHP Partnership as a complementary initiative that strengthens ATACH's efforts. The delegate also offered insights on the Belém health action plan for the adaptation of the health sector to climate change.

The main outcomes included concrete inputs to the [Belém health action plan's draft](#), clearer articulation of countries' responsibilities under ATACH, and defined pathways to embed health as a core pillar of climate action ahead of COP30. Participants also presented scientific deliverables to support implementation of the Belém health action plan.

At the conference, a new WHO report [Health system strengthening interventions to improve the health of displaced and migrant populations in the context of climate change](#) was launched.

Click [here](#) for further conference highlights. Recordings are available [here](#). Ahead of COP30, [WHO calls for urgent action on climate and health](#).

1 September 2025, virtual



The second of three virtual hearings of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health focused on the opportunities and health co-benefits of climate action for present and future generations. Under the theme “[transforming risk to resilience](#)”, experts discussed strategies to achieve positive health outcomes through climate adaptation and mitigation practices that contribute to net-zero goals. Local examples from the WHO European Region showcased successful initiatives to enhance resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve public health. The hearing also examined the



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systemic and transformative actions needed to safeguard health security and strengthen climate resilience for communities.

Check out the [recording](#) to explore key highlights from the [speakers](#) and the main outcomes of the discussion.

2 September 2025, virtual

The WHO ECEH consultation on nature-based solutions (NbS) and health brought together experts and colleagues from health, environment and nature conservation fields to discuss the next phase of WHO's work in this regard, carried out in collaboration with the [WHO Collaborating Centre on Natural Environments and Health at the University of Exeter](#), United Kingdom. Building on the [Nature-based solutions and health report](#) launched in May 2025, participants explored the scope of a second report planned for May 2027, which will feature practical examples and implementation experiences of NbS and their potential to promote and protect health.

Guided by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Global Standard for NbS](#), the consultation gathered Member State perspectives on national policies, tools and case studies that could best support NbS work at national and subnational levels. Discussions focused on intersectoral collaboration, the role of the health sector in promoting and evaluating NbS and implementing NbS within health institutions to maximize health benefits.

Stay tuned for the next steps in developing the new NbS and health report!

7 September 2025, virtual

The world marked the [International Day of Clean Air for blue skies](#), highlighting solutions to air pollution. WHO/Europe continues to maintain its engagement in advocating for clean air and protecting health in the Region. With these aims, countries in the Region committed in the [Budapest Declaration](#) to revise policies towards stricter air quality standards and improved control of air pollution sources; support the transition and equitable access to renewable energy; and improve indoor air quality to protect health. A voluntary target to halve the health impacts of air pollution by 2040 has been included in the [Updated road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution](#), adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2025. For more concrete actions and expected outcomes, visit the WHO/Europe [website](#).





11 September 2025, Budapest, Hungary



Photo (from left to right): Oliver Schmoll, WHO ECEH; Márta Vargha, National Centre for Public Health and Pharmacy, Hungary; Peter Takács, Ministry of Interior, Hungary; Peter Sztáray, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary; and Haris Hajrulahovic, WHO Country Office in Hungary, during a briefing for diplomatic missions in Budapest on the upcoming Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

A briefing for diplomatic missions in Budapest on the upcoming [Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health](#) (see the “Upcoming events and initiatives” section) was hosted at the Ministry of Interior and organized by the WHO Country Office in Hungary in partnership with WHO ECEH. The event gathered over 50 participants and featured distinguished speakers, including Dr Péter Sztáray, State Secretary for Security Policy and Energy Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary; Dr Péter Takács, State Secretary for Health, Ministry of Interior of Hungary; Dr Márta Vargha, Chair of the Protocol and leading expert at the National Centre for Public Health and Pharmacy, Hungary; as well as Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe; and representatives of WHO ECEH.

The briefing highlighted the Protocol's unique role in linking water and sanitation with public health, sustainable development and international cooperation through legally binding commitments. Key priorities for the [Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties](#) include strengthening resilience of water and sanitation services to climate change and other global pressures. The outcomes of the meeting will contribute to the [2026 UN Water Conference](#) (2–4 December 2026, United Arab Emirates).



15–17 September 2025, Brussels, Belgium

The Department of Care of Flanders, in collaboration with the [WHO Regions for Health Network](#) and the [European Committee of the Regions](#) organized a three-day conference on [how to implement health and well-being policies on climate change](#). The event brought together policy-makers, health professionals and experts across 15 countries and 14 regions from the WHO European Region, to exchange experiences and practical solutions. Discussions covered topics such as heat-health action plans, sustainable health-care infrastructure, flood preparedness, air quality in hospitals, vector-borne diseases and the integration of health into all policies. The conference also focused on how to act on the impact of climate change on health and well-being, as well as on the impact of health and care systems on climate. The event provided an opportunity to discuss good practices in depth and learn from each other across six different thematic workshops.

17–18 September 2025, Brussels, Belgium (hybrid)



The [EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action](#) convened for a two-day meeting focused on advancing climate-resilient, environmentally sustainable and low-carbon health systems. The meeting featured reflections on outcomes of the Fifth Global Conference on Climate and Health, along with country updates on building greener, more resilient health systems. The second day of the meeting focused on planning the next deep dive session on scalable, patient-centred innovations in pharmaceutical sustainability, and shaping the 2026 strategy, including future themes such as heat and climate literacy. The event fostered knowledge sharing, peer learning

and strategic planning, reinforcing the Partnership's commitment to health sector climate action across Europe and beyond.



17–19 September 2025, Kaunas, Lithuania

The European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA Europe) and the Lithuanian Sports University hosted the network's 20th annual meeting and 16th conference, under the theme "[Health-enhancing physical activity: taking steps towards sustainability](#)".

The conference brought together scientists, experts, policy-makers, professionals and stakeholders to share knowledge, explore innovations and bridge the gap between research and practice in health-enhancing physical activity. Participants exchanged the latest advancements in science, policy and practice while fostering collaboration to drive change across Europe and beyond.



The programme featured keynote lectures, symposia, oral sessions, short pitches and networking events, alongside the annual HEPA Europe meeting and working group sessions. Ms Francesca Racioppi, Head of WHO ECEH, delivered a keynote address that drew high interest. Her presentation, "Race to the finish: our evolving understanding of the role of active mobility for a sustainable future", highlighted the growing importance of active mobility in achieving sustainability goals.

19 September 2025, Astana, Kazakhstan

This September marked a significant milestone for public health and environmental sustainability in Kazakhstan, as a WHO mission led by Robb Butler, WHO Special Representative for Climate and Health, and experts from WHO ECEH and [WHO Country Office in Kazakhstan](#) joined national efforts to advance comprehensive health impact assessments

The mission began on 11 September in the Atyrau Region with a workshop addressing environmental challenges linked to oil and gas development and their effects on health. Special attention was given to vulnerable groups; children, pregnant women and people with chronic conditions.

WHO experts also met with government officials, business, media and local communities, before continuing to the Aral Sea area in Kyzylorda Region. The mission concluded in Astana on 19 September at the event "Capacity-building on environment and health in the one health approach in Kazakhstan". The event focused on building capacity across health, veterinary and environmental sectors. Participants followed presentations and engaged



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in group sessions to explore integration strategies. This workshop concluded the 10-day mission assessing the health and environmental impacts of the Aral Sea crisis and the petrochemical industry in Atyrau Region.



Photo: Robb Butler, WHO Special Representative for Climate and Health, WHO/Europe, during the country support mission in Kazakhstan.

24 September 2025, New York, United States of America

The General Assembly of the UN side event “Achieving safe, sustainable, and universal WASH, waste and electricity services in health care facilities: Progress on the 2023 General Assembly Resolution” brought together governments, health leaders and development partners at the UN headquarters in New York and online via UN Web TV to mark a major milestone in global health.

Hosted by the governments of Hungary and the Philippines on behalf of the UN Group of Friends in Support of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Health Care Facilities, the event featured the launch of the [*Essential services for quality care: water, sanitation, hygiene, health care waste and electricity services in health care facilities: global progress report*](#) (see the “Latest publications and capacity-building materials” section), developed by WHO and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

The session showcased country-level progress following the landmark 2023 UN resolution on sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities ([A/RES/78/130](#)), and emphasized the urgent need for safe, sustainable and universal access to essential services in health facilities.

The WHO Regional Director for Europe joined the opening panel to reaffirm WHO’s commitment to advancing WASH improvements for quality of care. He praised national champions, highlighted ECEH-supported work in countries of the European Region and



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made a compelling case for stronger leadership and sustained investment to ensure dignity for patients and staff, and safe care for all.

Ministers, UN leaders, partner organizations and frontline practitioners shared insights on challenges, breakthroughs, and strategies to accelerate action and investment. The event also underscored critical linkages to primary health care, maternal and newborn health, climate resilience and universal health coverage.

24-26 September 2025, Balatonfüred, Hungary

The [EuroVelo & Cycling Tourism Conference](#) revolved around cycling and cycling tourism, bringing together experts from across Europe. The core of the programme featured insightful presentations and interactive workshops focused on environmental, social and economic sustainability – all viewed through the lens of cycling.

In the opening session WHO/Europe's keynote highlighted the wide-ranging health benefits of active mobility. WHO presented compelling evidence on how walking and cycling contribute to improved health outcomes while advancing environmental, social and economic objectives. The presentation also showcased WHO's ongoing efforts through the [Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme](#) platform, recent publications, global toolkits and the WHO/Europe regional campaign "[Let's Get Moving! 100 Reasons to Walk and Cycle More](#)".



Photo: Keynote on cycling and health with Nino Sharashidze, WHO ECEH, and Dr László Babai, Hungarian Lifestyle Medicine Society.



Photo: Technical visit on EuroVelo 14 along the northern shore of Lake Balaton.

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30 September 2025, virtual

At the [12th meeting](#) of the [Working Group on Health in Climate Change](#), countries and partners came together to share experiences, highlight new evidence, and strengthen collaboration across the WHO European Region. The meeting provided a dynamic platform for countries and partners to:

- share updates on global and regional climate-health initiatives, including COP30, the Belém health action plan, the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health and WHO/Europe's [Second European Programme of Work](#);
- review preliminary findings from the [2025 WHO Health and Climate Change Global Survey](#) and [updates](#) on the Research Agenda for Action on Climate and Health (REACH);
- explore the work of the [EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action](#), with practical lessons from recent activities;
- discuss country experiences on issues such as heat-health action, climate risk assessment, climate literacy programmes, mental health and climate change and building climate-resilient health systems;
- exchange insights through thematic breakout sessions on innovative and emerging approaches; and
- strengthen collaboration by shaping future joint activities and priorities for the Working Group.

By setting shared priorities and shaping a new joint workplan, the Working Group on Health in Climate Change is helping countries turn global and regional commitments on climate change and health into action – advancing climate-resilient, sustainable health systems that protect communities.

30 September–3 October 2025, Bad Hofgastein, Austria

The European Health Forum Gastein is a European health policy platform, providing a neutral and inclusive space to advance health, solidarity and equity in the European Union and beyond. This year's conference, organized in collaboration with WHO/Europe, brought together policy-makers, experts and stakeholders under the theme "[Rethinking solidarity in health: Healing Europe's fractured social contract](#)". In the context of rising inequality, disinformation and political polarization, participants explored how health can help rebuild Europe's social cohesion. In the session on climate change and health inequalities, WHO ECEH outlined the climate and health focus for the [Second European Programme of Work](#). The session also presented initiatives tackling climate-related health inequalities such as the [Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#) and the [European Climate and Health Observatory](#) and EuroHealthNet's [call](#) for an European Union Strategy on Climate and Health.



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© European Health Forum Gastein

Top photo: Francesca Racioppi (second from right), Head of WHO ECEH, together with representatives from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, EuroHealthNet and the Lancet Countdown in Europe, participating in the session on climate change and health inequalities.



Watch the recording of the [session](#) to take a deeper dive into the discussions.



Enjoy the [cartoons](#) inspired by European Health Forum Gastein conversations.



Check out the [article](#) to gain a deeper understanding of the discussion content.



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.

Progress on household drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene 2000–2024: Special focus on inequalities



This report presents updated national, regional and global estimates for WASH in households for the period 2000–2024. Over this period, a quarter of the world's population (2.2 billion) gained access to safely managed drinking water, and a third (2.8 billion) gained safely managed sanitation. But while billions have gained access to WASH services, progress has been uneven and the total number of people still lacking access has decreased more slowly.

Explore the full [report](#) for more details and insights. For key facts from the report, see also the [news article](#).

Thirsty for facts?

- One in four people around the world still do not have access to safe drinking water.
- 3.4 billion people still lack safely managed sanitation.
- Adolescent girls aged 15–19 are less likely than adult women to participate in activities during menstruation, such as school, work and social pastimes.



Updated country tracker on WASH in health-care facilities

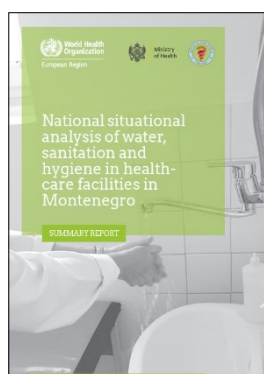


WHO and UNICEF have released an updated [country progress tracker](#) that shows how countries are advancing efforts to improve WASH and waste services in health-care facilities. The tracker, now covering 107 countries – including 10 from the European Region – underpins global monitoring against the [2023 UN General Assembly Resolution](#) on WASH, waste and electricity in health-care facilities.

The tracker provides the most comprehensive picture yet of how countries are taking forward the eight practical steps recommended by WHO and UNICEF to improve WASH services in health facilities, from establishing national standards to developing costed roadmaps, strengthening health information systems and building workforce capacity.

- On 29 July, WHO and UNICEF hosted a fast-paced, 30-minute webinar to unveil the 2025 update of the [WASH in health care facilities country progress tracker](#). The session highlighted global progress, persistent gaps and the growing use of the tracker to drive accountability and action.
- Watch the video: [English](#); [French](#); [Russian](#); and [Spanish](#).

National situational analysis of water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities in Montenegro: summary report



The [summary report](#) on the national situational analysis of WASH in health-care facilities in Montenegro, jointly published by WHO/Europe, the Ministry of Health and the Institute for Public Health of Montenegro, provides a detailed overview of current service conditions and the broader governance environment supporting quality care. By assessing both strengths and challenges, the report identifies clear priorities and actionable steps to improve WASH services and their integration across public health domains, including infection prevention and control and antimicrobial resistance.

The report demonstrates how situational analysis with standardized tools (e.g. [Water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities: a practical tool for situation assessment and improvement planning](#)) can be effectively used to generate evidence, guide policy and mobilize action. Montenegro's experience offers a valuable example for other countries and partners seeking to conduct similar assessments. Since the conclusion of the study, Montenegro has already taken steps to implement key recommendations, including introducing water quality monitoring, developing national standard operating procedures for WASH and cleaning, and applying facility-based risk-management with the [Water and sanitation for health facility improvement tool \(WASH FIT\): a practical guide for improving quality of care through water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities. Second edition](#) – promising steps toward a more resilient, equitable and high-quality health system.

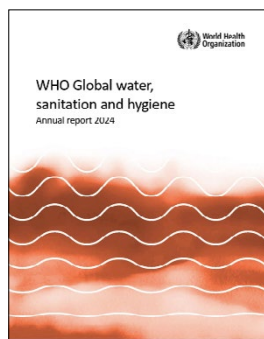


Essential services for quality care: Water, sanitation, hygiene, health care waste and electricity services in health care facilities



This [report](#) provides the latest progress in ensuring universal access to WASH, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities, featuring case studies from countries in the Region. This document highlights countries that have demonstrated a readiness to scale up implementation (e.g. put in place national standards, roadmaps and monitoring); provides insights to improve WASH, waste and electricity in health-care facilities; and presents recommendations on what needs to happen to achieve universal services and address inequities. The report confirms the momentum on standards, baselines and national roadmaps for WASH, waste and electricity in health-care facilities, including in developing countries. Yet it also reports on billions of people that still receive care where basic services are absent.

WHO global water, sanitation and hygiene: annual report 2024



The [WHO Results Report 2024–2025](#) indicates that global access to safely managed drinking-water services rose from 71% in 2018 to a projected 87% by 2025; safely managed sanitation from 53% to 80%; and basic hygiene services from 74% to a projected 89%. These gains have driven notable reductions in diarrheal disease, underscoring the foundational role of WASH in health improvement and WHO's corporate accountability, and reinforcing WASH as a core driver of results across universal health coverage, health emergencies and healthier populations.

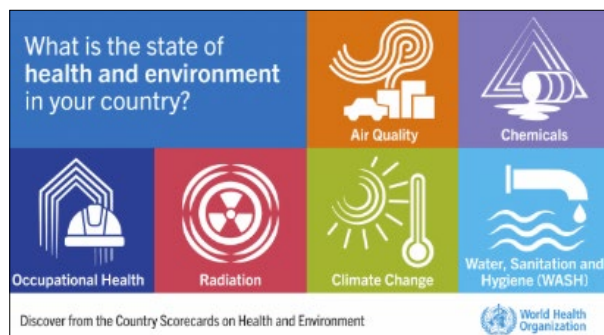
This [report](#) presents key highlights of WHO's work in 2024, showcasing achievements driven by country-level leadership in mobilizing domestic investment, supported by WHO's technical guidance and resources.

BMJ Global Health supplement with evidence informing the forthcoming WHO/ UNICEF guidelines on hand hygiene in community settings

This [special BMJ Global Health supplement](#) features original research from distinguished global colleagues, synthesizing the latest evidence across five systematic reviews. These reviews, led by Emory University, United States and commissioned by WHO, will inform the forthcoming WHO/ UNICEF guidelines on hand hygiene in community settings. Explore the commentary, research and explainer video [here](#).

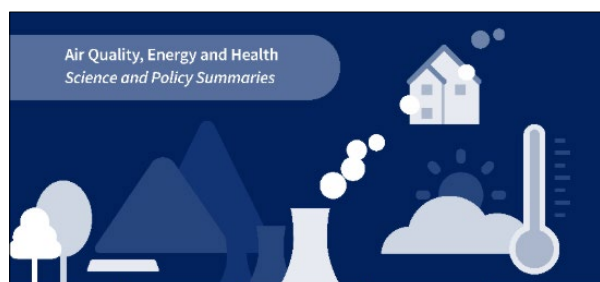


Health and environment country scorecards



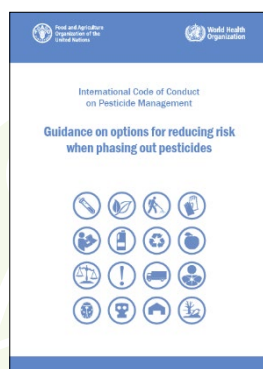
WHO has released the 2024 update of its [health and environment country scorecards](#), assessing how countries are managing eight major environmental threats to health across sectors. These threats include air pollution, unsafe WASH, climate change, loss of biodiversity, exposure to chemicals, exposure to radiation, occupational risks and environmental risks in and around health-care facilities. This year's edition also introduces a new summary score, offering a concise snapshot of how environmental conditions are impacting people's health.

Air Quality, Energy and Health: Science and Policy Summaries



This WHO [series](#) provides concise overviews of current knowledge and evidence on topics related to air quality, energy access, climate change and health. These summaries aim to support decision-makers by presenting key insights from scientific research. Among the summaries, several titles address the links between air quality and climate change, others address transboundary air pollution, transport, air pollution and health, and air quality legislation.

International code of conduct on pesticide management: guidance on options for reducing risk when phasing out pesticides

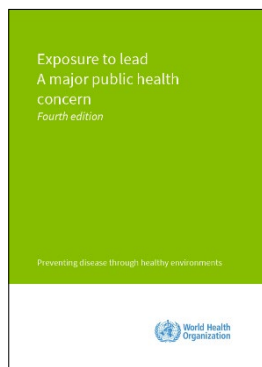


This [guidance](#) covers different options for banning or phasing out a pesticide and suggests related risk reduction measures to be taken during the phase-out period. A key focus of this guidance is how to take action to manage, prevent, minimize and communicate about identified risks during the implementation of a phase-out strategy

It is intended primarily for stakeholders in low- and middle-income countries with inadequate legislation, compliance and enforcement, as well as limited resources.



Exposure to lead: a major public health concern: preventing disease through healthy environments



This [document](#) provides an updated information and guidance on lead poisoning interventions and concrete actions for decision-makers. This is the fourth edition and it has been updated to reflect new estimates of the burden of disease from exposure to lead. The new estimates published by the Institute of Health Evaluation and Metrics for 2021 estimate that 1.5 million deaths globally were attributed to lead exposure in 2021, primarily due to cardiovascular deaths.

Climate change and workplace heat stress: technical report and guidance



This [publication](#) provides an overview of evidence and guidance on the growing challenge of workplace heat stress in the context of climate change. It highlights the health and productivity risks faced by billions of workers, especially in manual labour sectors. The report details the physiological, socioeconomic and mental health impacts of heat stress and outlines evidence-based strategies for prevention and mitigation. It emphasizes the need for occupational heat action programmes, stakeholder collaboration and tailored interventions to protect vulnerable workers, reduce productivity losses and support sustainable development in a warming world.

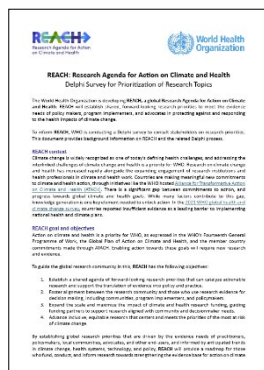
Extreme Heat Action Profile



WHO supports countries in developing heat-health action plans, establishing early warning systems, and integrating climate risks into health governance to protect vulnerable populations and enhance the resilience of health systems. This [document](#) provides key facts, initiatives and resources on heat.



REACH: Research Agenda for Action on Climate and Health: Delphi Survey for Prioritization of Research Topics



The WHO is developing REACH – a global Research Agenda for Action on Climate and Health – to establish shared, forward-looking research priorities to meet the evidence needs of policy-makers, programme implementers and advocates in protecting against and responding to the health impacts of climate change. To inform REACH, WHO is conducting a Delphi survey to consult stakeholders on research priorities. This [document](#) provides background information on REACH and the related Delphi process.



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 from the EHTF meeting in Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) (June 2024) to the latest virtual session in Bonn, Germany (June 2025).
- 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.





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.

European Environmental Agency: Europe's environment and climate: knowledge for resilience, prosperity and sustainability



This [report](#) by the European Environmental Agency provides an integrated narrative, examining the central and vital role that the climate and natural environment play in ensuring health, resilience and prosperity for people, anchored in the European Union's vision for a sustainable Europe by 2050. In addition, check out the [thematic briefings](#) and the [country profiles overview](#). The thematic briefings provide a concise and comparable overview of the key trends visible in 35 environment- and climate-related topics, as well as enablers for a green transformation. The country profiles complement this by providing concise, country-level assessments on key trends in environment, climate and socioeconomic developments, examining core systems such as energy, mobility and food in the 38 European Environmental Agency member and cooperating countries.

In a nutshell, Europe is showing progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. However, the overall state of Europe's environment remains concerning with environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and the growing impacts of climate change, which continue to pose serious risks to health, security and economic stability.

United Nations environmental programme: Frontiers 2025: The Weight of Time



The 2025 edition of the Frontiers report, [The Weight of Time: Facing a new age of challenges for people and ecosystems](#), spotlights emerging environmental issues before they escalate into global or regional crises. It examines how environmental changes – including climate warming, river restoration, demographic shifts and extreme weather – affect ecosystems, human health and biodiversity. The report highlights emerging risks such as reactivated microbes, remobilized pollutants and vulnerabilities of older populations, while emphasizing strategies for ecological restoration and building resilient, sustainable communities.



July–September 2025

Talks on the global plastic pollution treaty adjourn without consensus

Following [10 days of negotiations](#), [Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee](#) talks to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, adjourned early on 15 August without consensus on a text of the instrument. The Committee agreed to resume negotiations at a future date to be announced.

The meeting adjourned with a clearly expressed desire by Member States to continue the process, recognizing the significant difference of views between Member States.

COP30 Presidency outlines priorities and vision for the diplomatic community

On 17 September 2025, Brazil's [vision and priorities](#) for the forthcoming COP30 in Belém were presented at a briefing for the diplomatic community hosted by the World Meteorological Organization entitled the “house of weather, climate and water”. The Brazilian Presidency has designated COP30 as the “implementation COP,” with countries being urged to commit to more ambitious climate action plans called Nationally Determined Contributions to implement the [Paris Agreement](#).

The World Meteorological Organization Ozone Bulletin says the ozone hole in 2024 is smaller than previous years

The [World Meteorological Organization Ozone Bulletin](#) was issued for World Ozone Day on 16 September and the 40th anniversary of the [Vienna Convention](#), which recognized stratospheric ozone depletion as a global problem and provided the framework for mobilizing international cooperation in ozone research, systematic observations and scientific assessments.

The Bulletin reported that the low level of ozone depletion observed in 2024 was partly due to naturally occurring atmospheric factors which drive year-to-year fluctuations. However, the long-term positive trend reflects the success of concerted international action.



The European Commission launches a strategic roadmap to tackle climate-health risks through research and innovation

In June, the European Commission released its [*Strategic research and innovation agenda on health and climate change*](#); a comprehensive roadmap designed to guide the planning of future funding for research and innovation on climate change and health. With input from a wide range of stakeholders, the agenda identifies critical research priorities – including on the health impacts of climate change, the adaptation of health-care systems and climate mitigation within the health sector –while also emphasizing the need for improving and expanding interdisciplinary collaboration, evidence-based policy-making and global equity in cooperation. Supported by [*Horizon Europe*](#), the agenda aims to understand and mitigate climate-related health risks, strengthen adaptation practices and resilience, and reduce health inequalities by fostering innovation from early-stage research to policy implementation. Recognizing climate change as both an environmental and public health crisis, the initiative underscores the European Union's commitment to coordinated, inclusive action to protect communities worldwide. The agenda will be implemented under a flagship action of the [*Strategy for European Life Sciences*](#), under which at least €170 million will be mobilized for research and innovation.



8. UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

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

[Third hearing of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#) (2 October 2025, virtual).

[25th International Walk21 Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities](#) (6–10 October 2025, Tirana, Albania).

[World Health Summit 2025 “Taking Responsibility for Health in a Fragmenting World”](#) (12–14 October 2025, Berlin, Germany).

[23rd Session of the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme](#) (22–24 October 2025, Geneva, Switzerland).

[75th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe](#) (28–30 October 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark).

EHTF activity: country consultation on environment and health professional profiles and competency framework (29 October 2025, virtual).

WHO Bonn School on Environment and Health course on Nature and Health (13 October–10 November 2025, virtual).

Third Meeting of the EHP Partnership on Human Biomonitoring (4 November 2025, Estonia), followed by WHO training (5–6 November 2025)

Third deep dive of the EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action on “The pharmaceutical challenge: Greener and more sustainable solutions” (4 November 2025, virtual)

[International One Health Conference](#) (5–6 November 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark).

[Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health](#) (5–7 November 2025, Budapest, Hungary).



Shoutout! Key event on WASH and health in the Region!

Celebrating 20 years of WASH Action: building resilience for the future

The overarching theme of resilience will be central to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health. Hosted by the Government of Hungary, the meeting aims to advance the WASH and health agenda in the pan-European region by setting an ambitious work programme for the coming 3 years. While reflecting on 20 years of achievements made under the Protocol, the meeting will look forward towards building resilience in the face of a changing climate and other global pressures, and to future-proof water and sanitation systems to protect health and the environment – now and for generations to come.

5 November 2025: high-level segment of the Meeting of the Parties



The high-level segment will bring together ministers, senior decision-makers and stakeholders to renew political commitment to resilient WASH systems. Participants will focus on opportunities and solutions for enhancing preparedness and resilience in face of climate change and other pressures and risks. The segment will celebrate 20 years since the [Protocol](#) entered into force, highlighting its legacy, successes and ongoing relevance.

5–7 November 2025: general segment of the Meeting of the Parties

This segment will assess progress and define the Protocol's future direction. Delegates will review results across all programme areas and discuss proposed activities for the next 3 years. Partners will share experiences and are expected to align their efforts with the Protocol's objectives. Key outcomes will include the adoption of the programme of work for 2026–2028, the launch of a variety of new tools and publications, the adoption of a Strategy for implementation of the Protocol and the setting of targets for financial sustainability. Several thematic side events will enrich the programme.

In case of questions, please contact the Joint Secretariat:

WHO/Europe: euwatsan@who.int

UNECE: protocol.water_health@un.org



July–September 2025

18th European Public Health Conference “Investing for Sustainable Health and Well-Being” (11–14 November 2025, Helsinki, Finland).

COP30 (10–21 November 2025, Belém, Brazil).

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).

Fifth European Union Clean Air Forum (1–2 December 2025, Bonn, Germany).



July–September 2025

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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