



EUROPEAN
ENVIRONMENT AND
HEALTH PROCESS

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

Bonn, Germany (hybrid), 17 June 2025



Introduction

1. Nearly 100 participants from 38 Member States and 12 stakeholder organizations came together for the [15th meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force](#) (EHTF), held virtually from Bonn, Germany.
2. These highlights capture the key outcomes of the meeting and are structured around the main themes discussed during the meeting sessions.
3. The content navigation is provided below:

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Opening reflections

4. The meeting was opened with warm welcomes from the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health – the meeting host – and the Chair of the EHTF, setting the stage for a forward-looking and action-oriented exchange.
5. WHO presented two major updates: first, that environment and health will be one of the central pillars of the forthcoming [Second European Programme of Work](#) (EPW2), which will guide WHO/Europe's priorities through to 2030. Developed through broad consultations with Member States and stakeholders, EPW2 reaffirms strong regional commitment to the legacy of the [Budapest Conference](#). A finalized EPW2 document will be submitted to Member States for adoption at the 75th session of WHO Regional Committee for Europe (28–30 October 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark).
6. Second, the launch of the WHO [Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health](#), chaired by former Icelandic Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir and supported by Professor Sir Andy Haines. This high-level Commission brings together 11 leaders from across sectors to develop actionable recommendations that will strengthen the health sector's role in addressing the climate crisis.

A new reality driving opportunities

7. This session explored how today's shifting political and economic realities are shaping environment and health policies and practices across the WHO European Region. The stage was set by emphasizing the crucial role of EHTF members in delivering on the [Budapest commitments](#) and by inviting participants to hear powerful youth voices from the Nordic and Baltic regions through a [video](#), calling for bold action in response to the triple crisis.
8. Two experts from Utrecht University, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Dr George Downward and Juliette Mattijsen, shared insights on maintaining long-term ambitions despite political tensions and crises, reframing environmental justice narratives and empowering the EHTF to drive change. The session closed with a discussion, highlighting shared challenges and opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the Budapest commitments.
9. The discussion, including expert insights and EHTF exchanges, is summarized in Box 1 below.



Photo: visual from the 15th meeting of the EHTF. © WHO.

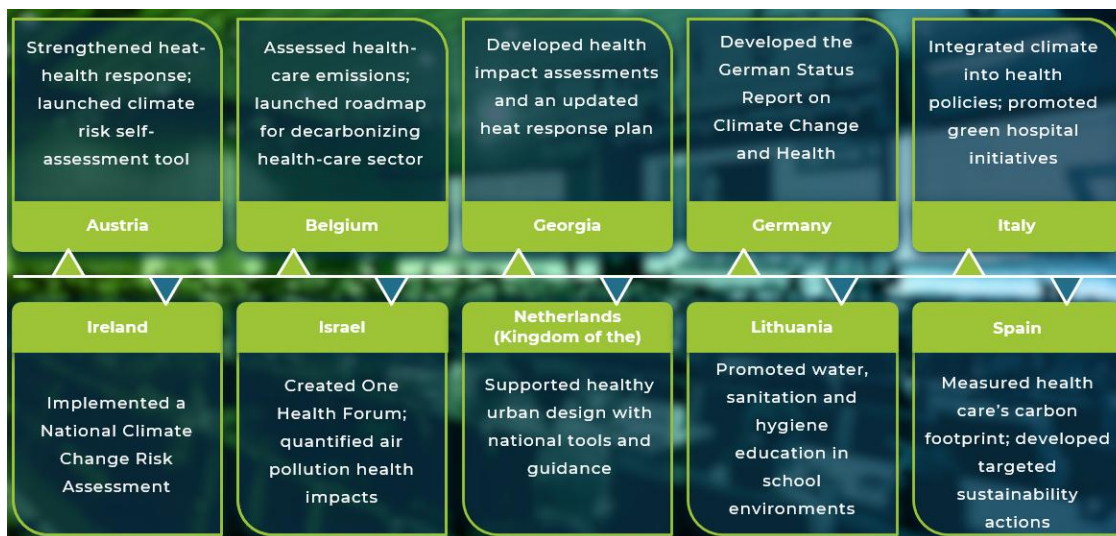
Box 1. New realities, new opportunities: key takeaways for driving the Budapest commitments forward

- 🌱 **The EHTF as a strategic driver:** the EHTF plays a pivotal role in steering efforts to implement the Budapest commitments. Acting as a central coordinating body, the EHTF fosters collaboration between international organizations, governments and stakeholders to align priorities and maximize impact. The collaboration between sectors and different administrations levels is key to address the triple crisis.
- 🌱 **Member State leadership is essential:** political commitment from Member States remains crucial. Their leadership shapes national policies, allocates resources and ensures that environmental health strategies translate from global commitments into concrete, measurable actions on the ground.
- 🌱 **Stakeholder involvement boosts success:** engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including communities, health-care professionals and civil society, builds trust and collective ownership. This inclusiveness ensures solutions are contextually appropriate, equitable and more likely to be sustained over time.
- 🌱 **Local dialogues accelerate implementation:** grassroots and neighborhood-level citizen dialogues enable transparent conversations about shared challenges and trade-offs. These smaller-scale forums help share burdens fairly, spark innovative solutions and create a sense of agency among participants.
- 🌱 **Co-benefits strengthen justification:** actions aimed at environmental improvements often produce multiple positive outcomes beyond the initial goal, such as improved air quality, community well-being and economic growth. Highlighting these co-benefits strengthens the case for investment and broadens stakeholder support. To tackle the root causes of the triple crisis it is important to do so by shifting the narrative to a solution-based approach.
- 🌱 **Communication is critical for buy-in:** effective communication strategies balance raising awareness about risks with inspiring hope through positive solutions. Clear, consistent messaging helps maintain momentum, overcomes skepticism and motivates sustained engagement across sectors. It is crucial to involve the people who are most affected by the triple crisis.
- 🌱 **Harnessing climate leaders in health care:** within the health-care sector, climate leaders and sustainability champions drive the innovation and adoption of green practices. Empowering these individuals to lead and influence peers accelerates the sector's transition toward sustainability.
- 🌱 **Non-linear progress requires persistence:** change is rarely smooth or linear; setbacks and challenges are inevitable. Recognizing this reality encourages persistence, adaptability and patience as incremental efforts cumulatively lead to transformative shifts.
- 🌱 **Generational change brings opportunity:** a new generation of professionals and activists brings fresh perspectives, creativity and energy. This generational shift offers a chance to rethink strategies, embrace innovation and reinforce long-term commitment to environmental health goals. The EHTF should promote the agency of young people.
- 🌱 **The EHTF must adapt and reflect continuously:** given the rapidly evolving global context, the EHTF must remain flexible, regularly reflecting on progress and challenges. Ongoing evaluation and adaptation ensure strategies remain relevant and effective amid shifting priorities and emerging threats.

On the road to implementing the Budapest commitments

10. This session offered a talk-show-style exchange designed to inspire and accelerate the national implementation of the Budapest commitments by highlighting impactful initiatives from the Member States and with the European Environment and Health Process (EHP) Secretariat showcasing how the commitments are being translated into tangible progress on the ground.
11. Ten country representatives shared inspiring updates (Fig. 1). The featured examples were drawn from a dedicated [poll](#) conducted in April–May 2025, which collected 19 submissions from 12 contributors, representing 11 countries and one stakeholder. Lively dialogue followed, including direct reflections and cross-country questions, adding depth to shared learning. Topics such as equitable urban design and sustainable health systems demonstrated a growing commitment to climate-resilient, health-focused policy-making.

Fig. 1. Member State developments as shared during the talk-show-style exchange



12. Furthermore, the EHP Secretariat provided the first draft regional snapshot of interconnected actions under the current EHTF Programme of Work for 2024–2025 implementation, reflecting meaningful progress since last year. Key developments from the Member States included strengthened climate adaptation plans, enhanced chemical safety measures and expanded commitments to safe and sustainable water management. The [Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health](#), that are an integral part of the EHTF Programme of Work, explored [behavioural and cultural insights for environment and health](#), [safe active mobility](#), [nature-based solutions and health](#).
13. Participants were informed about the recent launch of the “Let’s Get Moving! 100 Reasons to Walk and Cycle More” [campaign](#), which was launched at the latest [Bonn Dialogue](#). Fig. 2 presents an example of a simple step on how to participate in the #Let’sGetMoving challenge.

Fig. 2. How to participate in the #Let'sGetMoving challenge



14. The second half of the meeting spotlighted the EHP Secretariat initiatives, with brief updates from programme leads on the [report on nature-based solutions and health](#), a new course on nature and health under the Bonn School on Environment and Health (13 October–10 November 2025; application deadline: 5 September 2025) and work on professional profiles. Updates also covered the recent adoption of the updated [roadmap](#) on air pollution at the World Health Assembly, and ongoing negotiations toward a political declaration for the [upcoming UN meeting](#) on noncommunicable diseases. Additionally, participants were informed about two recent subregional meetings in central Asia on safe sanitation and wastewater surveillance, the upcoming regional water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in health-care facilities [meeting](#) in Budapest, Hungary, and the launch of [checklists](#) to support WASH emergency preparedness and response, with a focus on Ukraine.
15. Participants were also informed about the progress made on the draft monitoring framework for tracking the implementation of the commitments adopted at the Budapest Conference. Being developed in partnership with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the framework builds on the previous Ostrava framework and introduces new indicators to reflect evolving priorities, including climate, noncommunicable diseases, urban health and equity.
16. Starting from autumn, three key consultations will be held to advance work under the environment and health agenda: (1) Nature-based solutions and health, focusing on practical implementation and national policy needs; (2) the Monitoring framework for the Budapest Declaration commitments, presenting a draft framework for tracking progress with opportunity for feedback; and (3) the Environment and health professional profiles and competency framework, aiming to update and align workforce planning tools.

Election of officers

17. The EHTF elected a [new Bureau](#) for the 2025–2027 mandate (Table 1), in accordance with its [Rules of Procedure](#). The list of received nominations was shared in advance, reflecting a broad cross-section of technical and political leadership across environment and health sectors.
18. The elected Bureau includes representatives from Armenia, Georgia (Co-Chair), Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and the United Kingdom (Chair). Continuing stakeholders include the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition, the Health and Environment Alliance, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Environment Programme.
19. In addition, the EHTF formally welcomed a strengthened network of stakeholders supporting the implementation of the Budapest Declaration. [Newly recognized stakeholders](#) joining the partnership are the Centre for Planetary Health and Policy, Local Governments for Sustainability and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

Table 1. Member State representatives of the EHTF Bureau (2025–2027)

Country	Name	Organization
Armenia	Nune Bakunts	National Centre of Disease Control and Prevention
Georgia	Maia Javakhishvili (Co-Chair)	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
Germany	Barbara Werschkun	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
Hungary	Tamás Pándics	National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy
Ireland	Colin O'Hehir	Department of Health
Israel	Isabella Karakis	Ministry of Health
Italy	Alessandra Fidanza	Ministry of Environment and Energy Security
Montenegro	Borko Bajić	Institute of Public Health
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	Brigit Staatsen (Ex-officio)	Healthy Living Environment, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
Republic of Moldova	Gheorghii Turcanu	National Agency for Public Health
Tajikistan	Umidjon Ulugov	National Center for the Implementation of Obligations of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
United Kingdom	Raquel Duarte-Davidson (Chair)	UK Health Security Agency

Global and regional developments shaping environment and health

20. This session offered a strategic overview of key global, regional and subregional developments relevant to environment and health. Structured around three guiding questions, the discussion invited EHP stakeholder representatives and partners to reflect on their organization's key achievements over the past year, strategies for sustaining implementation amid limited resources and examples of partnerships leveraged to advance the Budapest commitments.

- 🌿 The **European Climate and Health Observatory** highlighted its work on climate-health knowledge, including a report on water-related climate impacts, a survey on heat-health surveillance and tools such as the European Environment and Health Atlas. The Observatory emphasized its growing focus on capacity building and training.
- 🌿 The **United Nations Environment Programme** shared updates on global policy processes, including the [Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health](#), the [Basel](#), [Rotterdam](#) and [Stockholm](#) conventions, and the [Plastic Pollution Treaty negotiations](#).
- 🌿 The **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe** reported on progress under the [Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution](#), including support for the [Gothenburg Protocol](#) revision and technical assistance to European, Caucasus and central Asian countries to further strengthen air pollutant emissions reductions. From the perspective of implementing the [Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme](#) (THE PEP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe led the preparation and adoption of the [Geneva Strategy on Transport, Health and Environment](#). Furthermore, the Commission continued to actively support [THE PEP Partnerships](#), taking the lead in revising their [Terms of Reference](#).
- 🌿 The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme** presented its renewed strategic focus on environmental aspects of housing, wastewater surveillance and urban health indicators. It also highlighted collaboration with WHO on updating housing and health guidelines, with expanded attention to mental health and social determinants.
- 🌿 **Local Governments for Sustainability** emphasized the role of nature-based solutions in urban health, sharing outcomes from the [GoGreenRoutes project](#) and announcing a forthcoming call to promote One Health and planetary health in urban policy.
- 🌿 The **Centre for Planetary Health and Policy** outlined its work on climate-health governance, adaptation and sustainability in the health sector, including contributions to the Lancet Countdown and national policy briefs.
- 🌿 **Health care Without Harm Europe** reported on its support to Member States in decarbonizing health care, training thousands of professionals on antimicrobial resistance and pharmaceutical pollution and influencing global policy through the Plastic Pollution Treaty negotiations.
- 🌿 The **Health and Environment Alliance** shared its advocacy work around the European Union elections, air quality and perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances regulation, including the launch of a [Healthy Air Coalition](#) and multilingual awareness campaigns on environmental health inequalities.
- 🌿 The **European Environment and Health Youth Coalition** presented a wide-ranging portfolio from national youth conventions to digital innovation, demonstrating how youth leadership is shaping environment and health agenda.

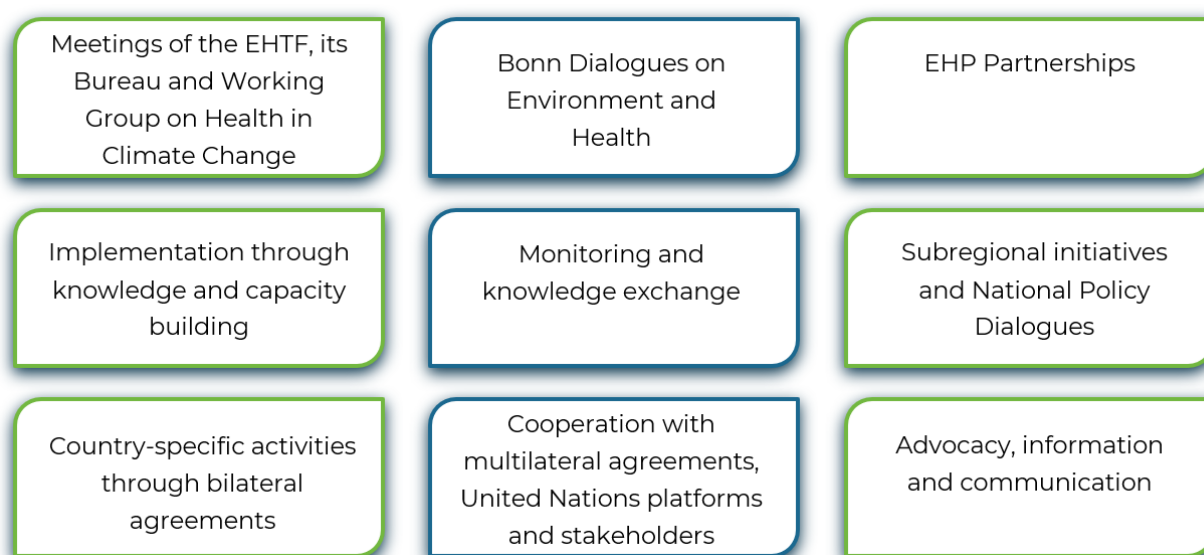
Finally, the Chair of the **Protocol on Water and Health** highlighted the importance of participating in the upcoming [Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health](#) (5–7 November 2025, Budapest, Hungary), which will adopt a strategy for implementing the Protocol, a system of targets to ensure the Protocol’s financial sustainability and a programme of work for 2026–2028 with a focus on strengthening the resilience of the water and sanitation sectors.

21. The session concluded with a strong call for continued collaboration, knowledge exchange and strategic alignment to accelerate implementation of the Budapest commitments.

Co-creating the EHTF Programme of Work for 2026–2027

22. With a clear focus on co-creation and co-design, the session opened with a presentation of the draft outline of the EHTF Programme of Work. The proposed structure builds on the Budapest Declaration and aligns with global and regional frameworks, including the Agenda for Sustainable Development and EPW2. The vision is to consolidate efforts through enhanced coordination, implementation and communication, especially vital in a context of constrained financial and human resources. The outline emphasizes avoiding duplication, strengthening partnerships and leveraging synergies across initiatives.
23. Key pillars of the proposed draft outline (Fig. 3) include the continuation of EHTF and working group meetings, the Bonn Dialogues and subregional and national policy dialogues. The Secretariat reiterated its openness to member-driven topics and virtual hosting of Dialogues, reinforcing the participatory nature of the process. Advocacy and communication were highlighted as areas requiring greater emphasis, with a call to transform the EHTF into a platform for knowledge exchange, partnership-building and visibility.

Fig. 3. Core components of the draft outline of the Programme of Work for the EHTF for 2026–2027



24. A particularly resonant moment came with the suggestion to begin early planning for the next Ministerial Conference, tentatively scheduled for 2030. While it may seem distant, the Secretariat emphasized that successful conferences require years of preparation, inclusive consultation and strategic foresight. Participants were encouraged to consider potential themes and hosting opportunities.
25. The session concluded with a reaffirmation of the EHTF's collaborative spirit. Participants were invited to submit written feedback on the draft Programme of Work, ensuring that the final version reflects the collective vision and expertise of the EHTF.



Cinematic journey through the EHP Partnerships

26. This session provided a structured overview of the progress and future direction of the six active [EHP Partnerships](#). It opened with a newly produced [video](#) summarizing key achievements since the latest EHTF meeting, showcasing the Partnerships' role in translating commitments into concrete action. The key updates from the EHP Partnerships are presented in Box 2.
27. With over 30 Member States now involved, the Secretariat is supporting coordination, communications and visibility through the development of an [annual summary](#), updated promotional [leaflets](#), regular [EHP Newsletter](#) features and plans for dedicated web pages for each Partnership. Member States were invited to provide feedback on these materials within two weeks.
28. The session reaffirmed the EHP Partnerships as a flexible, member-driven mechanism for advancing the Budapest Declaration and fostering regional collaboration.



Box 2. Highlights from the EHP Partnerships updates

-  The Partnership for **Health Sector Climate Action**, led by Ireland and joined by 11 Member States, aims to integrate climate action into health-care policies and build climate-resilient, low-carbon health systems. Closely aligned with the EHTF Working Group on Health in Climate Change and the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health, the Partnership has held two “deep dives”. The first, in Dublin, aimed to explore low-emission health-care transport. The second, shaped through virtual sessions and a meeting in Vienna, Austria, focused on subnational climate-health adaptation.
-  The Partnership on **Human Biomonitoring**, led by Germany and co-led by Georgia, uses human biomonitoring as a scientific tool to inform chemical regulation and protect public health. Since the Budapest Conference, the Partnership has grown to 21 Member States. Its second in-person meeting in Belgrade brought together 30 representatives from 19 countries to adopt a joint work programme. A WHO-led training for 37 experts followed, focusing on national capacity-building, study planning, communication and policy integration.
-  The Partnership on **Poison Centres**, led by the United Kingdom with co-leadership from the European Association of Poison Centres and Clinical Toxicologists, aims to strengthen poison centres across the Region. With eight Member States and others preparing to join, the Partnership held its inaugural meeting in February 2025 to define objectives and a workplan. A second meeting in Glasgow, United Kingdom, in May focused on sharing practices and refining the workplan, with Armenia formally joining during the session.
-  The Partnership on **Risk Reduction in the School Environment**, led by Hungary, promotes healthier school settings by addressing indoor air quality and WASH. Two online meetings have been held, hosted by Hungary’s National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy. The first, in November 2024, focused on WASH and air quality; and the second, in May 2025, featured WHO regional updates and national case studies. A third meeting is planned as a side event at the Seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health.
-  The Partnership on **Youth** supports young leaders in shaping environment and health agendas. Activities have ranged from study sessions and designing board games to policy advocacy. In November 2024, the Partnership co-hosted a youth engagement side event at the 29th Conference of the Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and led a communications campaign to attract new members. In April 2025, it convened a planning meeting for its 2025–2026 work programme. The International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations recently joined the Partnership.
-  THE PEP/EHP Partnership on **Healthy Active Mobility** has developed the Pan-European masterplans for cycling and walking. In October 2024, it held a meeting ahead of the Walk21 Conference, followed by a session in Rotterdam, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), in March 2025. A technical meeting in Ulm, Germany, advanced the integration of cycling and public transport, contributing to the forthcoming Active to Public Transport Action Plan.

Summary and next steps

29. The EHTF discussions reaffirmed the central role of environment and health in WHO/Europe's strategic direction, with the EPW2 positioning it as one of the core pillars.
30. EHTF members actively submitted updates on the implementation of the Budapest commitments, contributing to a rich session focused on opportunities for further action. The online [poll](#), available in English and Russian, will remain open for additional submissions and will help shape communications for upcoming EHTF and Bureau meetings, the EHP Newsletter, WHO-led events and other relevant initiatives.
31. A [new EHTF Bureau](#) was elected for the 2025–2027 mandate, and [new stakeholders](#) welcomed, bringing together diverse and experienced representatives from across the Region.
32. EHTF provided an agreement on the draft outline of the Programme of Work for 2026–2027. Written comments on the draft were welcome until the end of July 2025 to ensure an inclusive finalization of the first draft. The EHP Secretariat will initiate the second drafting phase afterwards.
33. Early preparations for the next Ministerial Conference, provisionally set for 2030, were encouraged, with participants invited to suggest possible themes and hosting.
34. EHTF members were invited to provide feedback on the EHP Partnerships' communication materials, including the draft video, annual summary report and updated leaflets, by the end of June.
35. The meeting provided updates on new reports, communication materials and upcoming events. Highlights from the meeting chat, shared by participants, are summarized in Annex. Participants were encouraged to stay informed about EHP-related developments through the [EHP Newsletter](#) and the WHO/Europe website.

Annex. Materials shared in the meeting chat

By Member States:

- [National Heatwave Plan evaluation](#) (Netherlands (Kingdom of the));
- [German Status Report on Climate Change and Health](#) (Germany);
- [Health effects of climate change: An update of the current risks of climate change for health](#) (Netherlands (Kingdom of the));
- [National Climate Change Risk Assessment Main Report](#) (Ireland);
- [Evaluación de la huella de carbono del sistema sanitario 2024](#) [Health System Carbon Footprint Evaluation] (Spain);
- [use of AirQ+ software in assessing the impact on health from exposure to particles in Valjevo, Leskovac and Novi Pazar](#) (Serbia); and
- [Roadmap for Sustainable, Low-Emission and Climate-Adapted Health and Care Services](#) (Norway).

By the European Environment and Health Process (EHP) Secretariat:

- [Updated road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution](#);
- [Checklists for strengthening water, sanitation and hygiene emergency preparedness and response: focus on Ukraine](#);
- [Nature-based solutions and health](#);
- [Improving health and well-being through nature](#);
- [Climate change and health: Draft Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health](#);
- Registration for the 2025 WHO Health and Climate Change Global Survey ([English](#), [French](#), [Russian](#)); and
- materials of the “[Let’s Get Moving! 100 Reasons to Walk and Cycle More](#)” campaign:
 - [Brochure](#)
 - [Social media tiles](#)
 - [Multilingual video](#).

By the EHP stakeholders:

- [Operation Zero](#);
- [Carbon monitoring mentoring programme](#);
- [LIFE RESYSTAL project](#);
- [AMR Educare project](#);
- [Health and Environment Alliance webinar series on the health impacts of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance](#);
- [Born Green Generation project](#);
- [Advancing Climate Change and Health Policies in Germany](#);
- [Advancing Climate and Health Policy](#);
- [Evidence report on climate change and health governance structures in Germany](#);
- [European Environment and Health Atlas](#);
- [Responding to climate change impacts on human health in Europe: focus on floods, droughts and water quality](#);
- [The impacts of heat and health: surveillance and preparedness in Europe](#);
- [Decent Work in Nature-based Solutions 2024](#);
- [Nature-based Solutions](#);
- [Priorities for advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet](#);
- [Youth Environment Assembly 2025](#); and
- [Prescription for the EU policy cycle 2024-2029: healthy people on a healthy planet](#).



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