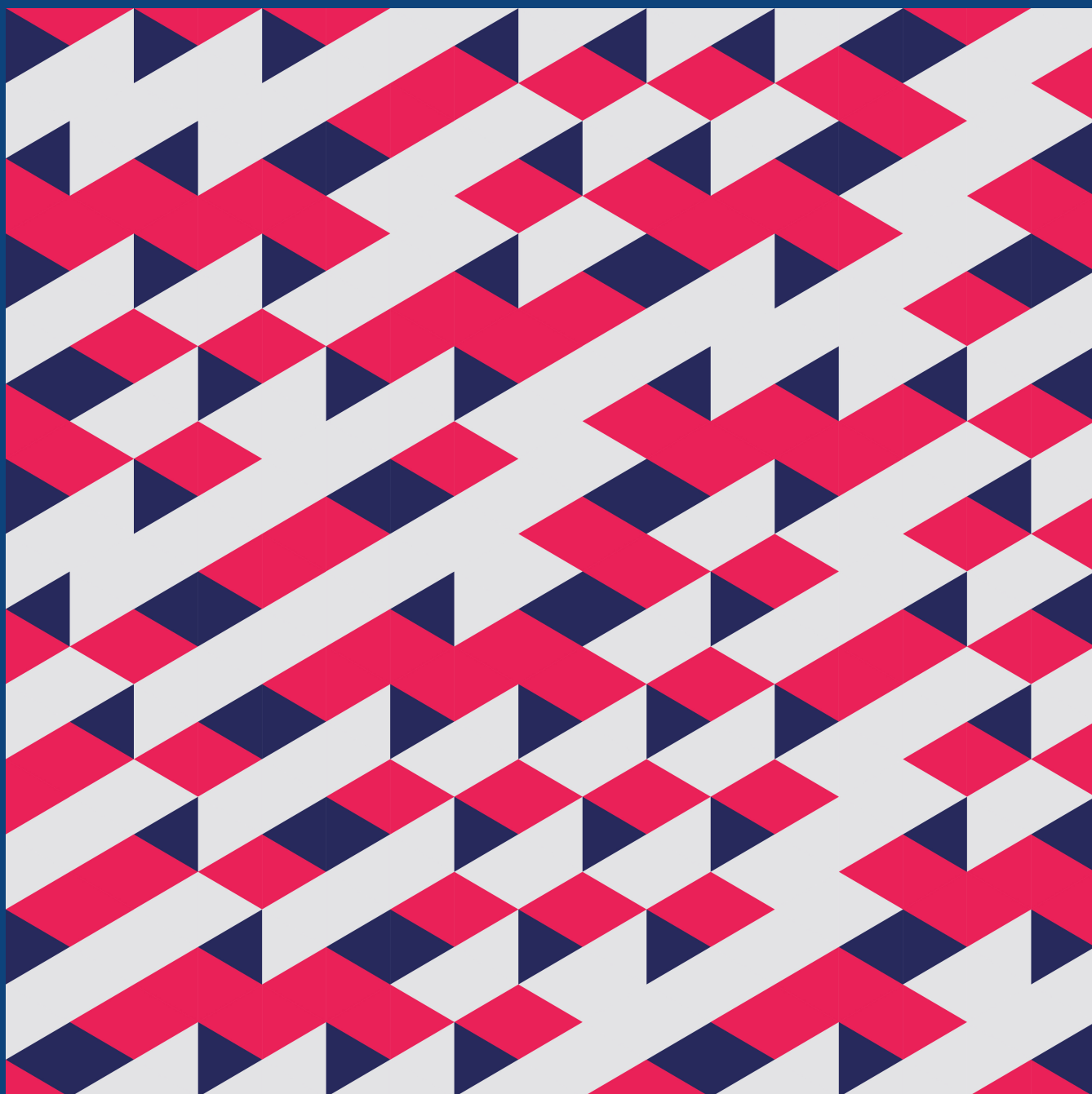




**World Health
Organization**

European Region

Innovation for public health in the WHO European Region





The urgency and cost of inaction

- The region is confronting converging pressures ranging from pandemics, climate change, demographic shifts, to geopolitical instability exacerbating public health challenges.
- Industry driven innovation outpacing public health systems adoption. In just one year, over 24,000 health and life science patents were filed across the European Union, yet fewer than 20% reach widespread use within five years. Innovation investments remain high, but the gap between innovation and impact persists at scale.
- Disruption of public health systems continues. By 2030, the Region faces a projected shortage of 1.2 million health workers. Emerging technologies-AI, digital therapeutics, mRNA vaccines, and personalized medicine-are transforming health systems, but policies, workforce training, and infrastructure often lag behind.
- Innovation potential not fully tapped in the region. With more than 250 health innovation hubs and science parks across the region, many are not systematically engaged by Ministries of Health. This leaves innovation underleveraged, resulting in missed opportunities for public health and the economy.

Mission: closing the implementation gap

WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) is positioned to contribute to bridging the gap between breakthrough innovations and population-wide health improvements- gap costing billions annually in missed opportunities, avoidable hospitalizations, preventable deaths, and wasted resources across the entire region. Our mission is to empower Ministries of Health to be proactive in harnessing innovation for public health, not just a passive recipient, ensuring health improvements are systemic, sustainable, and reach all communities.

Three pillars for action

- **Co-design:** WHO/Europe creates opportunities for Ministries to proactively identify priorities for which innovation is needed, based on horizon scanning and needs assessments
- **Connect:** WHO/Europe directly links health authorities with innovators and the wider innovation ecosystem through dynamic partnerships, matchmaking platforms, and collaborative events—enabling rapid adoption and exchange of proven solutions.
- **Catalyze:** WHO/Europe actively supports the sustainable scale-up of effective innovations—addressing bottlenecks in financing, procurement, workforce development, and helping ministries navigate challenges to real-world impact.

Recent milestones

- 1st WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) innovation ecosystem meeting on 12-13 March 2024, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Strategy for harnessing innovation for public health in the WHO European Region 2025–2030
- Innovation agenda for public health in the WHO European Region 2025–2030
- Technical Advisory Group on building an innovation ecosystem for public health

The road ahead

- Publishing the first foresight report (2026)
- Convening a Regional Public Health Innovation Summit
- Rolling out trainings in innovation management for public health leaders across diverse settings
- Drive mission driven country collaboratives as an approach to systematically scale country level innovations

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