Health and Environment in WHO European Region: Creating Resilient Communities and Supportive Environments

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Multiple diseases can be prevented through a healthy environment

- it is estimated that 1.4 million deaths occur annually in the WHO European Region from environmental determinants.
- The vast majority due to cardiovascular diseases.
Some facts and figures

Polluted air is responsible for the premature deaths every year of 7 million people globally and of 600 000 in the WHO European Region.
Some facts and figures

• Climate change is expected to cause over 250,000 additional deaths per year between 2030 and 2050.

• Water-related diseases account for approx. 18% of investigated outbreaks in the European Region. Every day 14 people die due to diarrhoea caused by poor water and sanitation.
Work of WHO Regional Office for Europe

• WHO Regional Office for Europe and other partners initiated the European Environment and Health Process (EHP) in 1989. EHP has been providing a joint platform for the health and the environment sectors to develop and implement common actions.
The political mandate

Health 2020 calls for the local promotion of services for environment and health and the encouragement of the health sector to act in a more environmentally responsible manner.

The Parma declaration and upcoming Ostrava Declaration are framing the response of WHO European MS in the area of environment and health by taking 2030 Development agenda as the overarching framework and enabler.

The Road to Dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the Planet” highlights that every sector has the responsibility to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Goals and strategies

Impetus is set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

Health and well-being linked to environmental and work-related factors are outcomes, determinants and enablers of sustainable development.
Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals
Health and well-being are an **outcome**, a **determinant** and an **enabler** of the Goals.
What’s new?

The 2030 Agenda and its Goals are:

- **Universal** = Relevant to all countries, developing & developed
- **Transformative** = Human rights-based, addressing governance & local dimension, focused on equity and on reaching those hardest to access, inclusive (“leave no one behind”)
- **Involving new actors**, including private sector and civil society
- **Silo breaker** = Require collaboration among sectors
Health in all policies = Health in all SDGs
Evolving understanding of environmental challenges to human health

- **Environmental challenges** can no longer be tackled in isolation, but linked to sectoral and social aspects, in Europe and globally.

- Most of the changes in the state of the environment are ultimately driven by unsustainable use of resources and consumption and production patterns.

- A need to move away from the hazard-focused, compartmentalised approach to environment and health, towards including the benefits of the environment to human health and well-being.

- Efforts to improve environmental quality need to be complemented by other measures, including changes in lifestyle and human behaviour, as well as consumption patterns.

Source: EEA/JRC, 2013; EEA, 2015
Nexus approach

- Health advice needs to consider the interlinkages between all components of the nexus.
- Interlinks are paving the way towards a more comprehensive approach in providing public health advice.
- Taking into account multisectoral approaches
Water–food–energy–climate change

- Demands for resources, such as water, energy and food will accelerate by major driving forces such as urbanization, population growth and climate change, and in turn create pressures on environment and human health.

- **Themes**: water and sanitation, climate change adaptation
Urban settings–energy–air pollution–climate change

- Climate change is the overarching challenge and driving force for the environmental impacts on health
- Cities contribute to 70% of energy-generated greenhouse gas emissions
- Urban perspective provides opportunities for a more integrative approach
- **Themes:** air pollution, noise, chemicals management, and management of hazardous wastes
Overarching and cross cutting issues

• Impacts of chemicals and sound chemicals management
• Environmentally-sustainable health systems
• Issues of infrastructure linked to resilience
• Technology, production and consumption
• Socio-economic inequalities and vulnerabilities
National Health Policy

Health across all these goals; and in health goal 3

Health 2020: facilitates implementation

- Around 35 Member States of the European Region have developed national health policies aligned with 2020; including setting national targets
"First we will eradicate poverty. Then we will break for coffee before we implement education for all in the world, achieve gender equality and save the oceans”.

A readers cartoon in the biggest Swedish daily paper.
Air Quality and Health

7 million premature deaths a year due to household and ambient air pollution

Economic cost of US$ 1.6 trillion in the WHO European Region

Globally, only in 12% of the urban populations the annual mean PM and the WHO AQ Guidelines are met
Air quality: Important gains in life expectancy

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Source: World Health Organization
June 13-15, 2017 - Ostrava, Czech Republic

http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2017/06/sixth-ministerial-conference-on-environment-and-health
Thank you for your kind attention!

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