



**EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH PROCESS**



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROCESS NEWSLETTER

November–December 2024

WRAPPING UP A
YEAR OF IMPACTFUL
COLLABORATION
2024

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1. EDITORIAL: WRAPPING UP A YEAR OF IMPACTFUL COLLABORATION

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this end of year issue of the [European Environment and Health Process \(EHP\) newsletter](#).

This has been another meaningful year for the EHP, shaped by your continued efforts and collaboration as members of the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) and partners of the EHP. Here are just a few EHP highlights from 2024:

Bonn Dialogues

In early 2024, the [Bonn Dialogue on Environment and Health](#) highlighted the role of [behavioural and cultural insights in driving progress in environment and health](#). A [policy brief](#) was published shortly afterwards to empower Member States and stakeholders across the Region on how to explore more evidence-based and cost-effective methods to support and promote sustainable behaviours for health and the environment. In October, another Bonn Dialogue on [active and safe mobility](#) advanced efforts to promote sustainable and safer transport options across the Region. During this Dialogue, a short film was launched showcasing the benefits of walking and cycling and it is now available in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#) and [Russian](#). This film is part of the upcoming social media campaign, “[Let’s get moving! 100 reasons to walk and cycle more](#)”.

EHP governance

At the [14th EHTF meeting](#) in Utrecht, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) the EHTF [marked one year](#) since the adoption of the [Budapest Declaration](#). Key achievements included adopting the 2024–2025 Programme of Work, agreeing on topics for the 2025 Bonn Dialogues, and enhancing the [Rules of Procedure](#) to foster greater inclusiveness and efficiency in our collaborative efforts.

Additionally, two EHTF Bureau meetings were held to strategize activities and set key milestones for implementing the Budapest Declaration.



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EHP Partnerships

Since summer, the EHP Partnerships welcomed more than 10 new partners from different countries. Furthermore, 2024 saw the launch of two new EHP Partnerships: one on poison centres, led by the United Kingdom, and the other on risk reduction in the school environment, led by Hungary. Additionally, the EHTF adopted updated Terms of Reference for the EHP Partnerships.

Governance, leadership, capacities and resources

The first-ever Executive Officers Meeting on Environment and Health, held in Bonn last December, aimed to strengthen governance, leadership and resources for environment and health: discussions among more than 30 country representatives centered on these key topics (see the “Top Stories” section below).

A publication summarizing the meeting’s discussions and highlighting country case studies will be released in 2025.

Stay tuned!

For more updates, read on to discover EHP activities across various countries, gain insights from efforts addressing health challenges linked to the triple crisis of climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss, and stay up to date with newly published materials.

Enjoy the read!
EHP Secretariat



2. TOP STORIES

Governance, leadership, resources and knowledge transfer – crucial accelerators of the implementation of the Budapest commitments

Following the [Seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health](#) in Budapest, Hungary, Member States committed to strengthening governance, capacities and resources to accelerate progress in environment and health across the WHO European Region. In this context, a dedicated regional meeting (2–4 December 2024, Bonn, Germany) provided a dynamic platform for peer exchange, fostering collaboration, innovative solutions and long-term networks to drive forward the Budapest commitments.

Accelerating action on key priorities

The meeting focused on advancing policy implementation in response to the triple crisis – climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss – while addressing governance, resources, communication and knowledge-sharing. Discussions explored:

- governance and leadership: strengthening institutional structures, intersectoral collaboration and policy integration;
- resources: enhancing workforce competencies, financial strategies and investment opportunities; and
- knowledge transfer, communication and advocacy: translating research into policy, improving strategic communication and tackling misinformation.

Through interactive discussions and knowledge exchange, participants reinforced their commitment to scaling effective environment and health policies, ensuring a healthier and more sustainable future for all.



Photos: Moments from the Executive Officers meeting. ©WHO



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Health in focus at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29)

COP29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan (11–24 November 2024), marked a pivotal moment in advancing the climate and health agenda, with WHO playing a key role in keeping health at the forefront of climate negotiations.

At the heart of this progress was the high-level event, COP Presidencies Bringing Health at the Centre of Climate Agenda, hosted by WHO, Azerbaijan as the COP29 Presidency, and Spain. Leaders underscored the need for continuity and synergy in climate-health initiatives, with a critical emphasis on translating past pledges into action. The COP Presidencies Continuity Coalition for Climate and Health was established in Baku by former and incoming COP presidencies, uniting global stakeholders to institutionalize health within the climate agenda.

WHO's key initiatives

The main WHO initiatives relating to COP29 are presented below.

- Ahead of COP 29, WHO launched the [COP29 Special Report on Climate and Health: Health is the Argument for Climate Action](#), a technical guidance document on [Quality Criteria for Integrating Health into Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#), as well as a [call](#) for the urgent integration of health in climate negotiations, an end to reliance on fossil fuels and for people-centred adaptation and resilience.
- Throughout COP29, WHO and the Wellcome Trust hosted a [Health Pavilion](#) to showcase evidence, initiatives and solutions that maximize the health benefits of tackling climate change.
- A day dedicated to the [Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health](#) (ATACH) brought together global leaders to accelerate climate-resilient, sustainable and equitable health systems. Key discussions focused on strengthening health systems, decarbonizing operations, mobilizing financing and embedding equity in climate-health policies. A significant milestone was the formal welcome of two new Member States – Azerbaijan and Tonga – to the ATACH.
- The WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) hosted two events in the Health Pavillion: “Building resilience to heat extremes in urban settings” together with the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific; and “Turning the tide: how health co-benefits of mitigation policies can transform urban climate action and foster healthier, happier cities for all”. The programme and the recorded livestreams can be found [here](#). In his [speech](#), the WHO Regional Director for Europe, Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, underscored the urgent need for healthier, more resilient cities and announced the launch of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health, strengthening climate leadership across the WHO European Region.
- WHO/Europe also played a key role in the high-level event on One Health, co-hosted by the Azerbaijan COP29 Presidency and the Quadripartite Secretariat – co-led by WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Organisation for Animal Health.



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- WHO/Europe contributed to several events in partnership with Member States, including an event on climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene led by Spain, highlighting the role of the [Protocol on Water and Health](#); an event on nature-based solutions led by Italy; an event on heat health led by Health Canada; and an event on mountains, climate change and health led by Kyrgyzstan.

Climate finance breakthroughs

COP29 closed with a new finance goal, known as the [New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance](#), setting a target of US\$ 300 billion annually by 2035 to support developing nations in climate adaptation and mitigation. Delegates also finalized the [global carbon credit trading framework](#) under the [Paris Agreement](#), aiming to fund climate projects while ensuring transparency and effectiveness.

United Nations (UN) World Court concludes landmark hearings on States' responsibility for climate change

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) held historic hearings on 2–13 December 2024 addressing States' obligations under international law to combat climate change; a process spearheaded by small island nations facing existential threats.

Initiated by a [UN General Assembly resolution](#), the [proceedings](#) involved 96 countries and 11 regional organizations presenting their views on the [Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change](#) under international law.

While a ICJ advisory opinion will be non-binding, it is expected to shape the future of international climate law.

Check out the WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus' [speech](#) where he emphasized the devastating health impacts on vulnerable nations, particularly Small Island Developing States, urged a rapid fossil fuel phase-out and highlighted the economic benefits of climate action, noting a return on investments in climate and health measures.



3. COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

One Health spotlighted in the latest edition of *La Santé en action* [health in action]

The latest [edition of *La Santé en action*](#) published by Public Health France highlights the One Health approach, focusing on “Preserving Nature to Protect People’s Health”. The publication explores the intricate connections between nature and health,

emphasizing the crucial role of nature, biodiversity and green spaces in promoting health and well-being. The issue underscores how safeguarding the environment is essential for improving public health outcomes.

Hungary leads the development of the heat early warning system for pregnant women

The WHO Country Office in Hungary, in collaboration with country offices in Bolivia and India, is developing a heat early warning system for pregnant women – an initiative selected as one of the 10 finalists in the WHO LEAD (Leap, Engage, Accelerate, Disrupt) Innovation Challenge.

Presented on 8 November 2024, this project will be further refined. Designed to protect maternal health in extreme temperatures, this project

showcases how global collaboration can drive innovative health solutions.

The LEAD Innovation Challenge is a capacity-building programme that empowers WHO’s global workforce to innovate and solve global health challenges and fosters creative solutions to global health challenges in line with WHO priorities. In 2024, 81 applications were submitted, with five winning projects set to receive seed funding for implementation.

Hungary advances sustainable health sector at hospital association congress

On 19–20 November 2024 the WHO Country Office in Hungary led a session “Greening the Health Sector” at the Hungarian Hospital Association’s mid-term congress. The event convened high-level experts and national institute leaders, serving as a key milestone in the strategic collaboration between the

Government, the Hospital Association and the National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy.

Aligned with the Budapest Declaration, this initiative aims to foster an environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient health sector in Hungary.



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North Macedonia advances climate-health action

On 11 November 2024, the WHO Country Office in North Macedonia and the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO ECEH) hosted a climate change and health briefing for representatives of the Ministry of Health and the Institute of Public Health in North Macedonia. Experts from WHO ECEH provided the latest insights on climate and health at global and regional levels, including

recent updates on networks like [ATACH](#) and the [EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action](#), and discussed national priorities in the area of climate and health. The briefing also highlighted the roles of WHO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in financially supporting and guiding climate and health initiatives in North Macedonia.

Highlighting the health risks on chemical safety in Kazakhstan

On 4 December 2024, the WHO Country Office in Kazakhstan participated in the seminar “Sanitary and Epidemiological Expertise of Chemicals in Industrial and Agricultural Sectors”, organized by the Centre of Sanitary-Epidemiological Expertise. The Country

Office delivered a presentation “Chemicals of Public Health Concern: Dioxins”, developed in collaboration with WHO ECEH, highlighting the health risks associated with toxic chemicals in the environment.

WHO advocates for a national poison centre in Kazakhstan

At the seminar “Lifecycle Management of Pesticides and Disposal of Persistent Organic Pollutants Pesticides in Central Asian Countries and Türkiye” (25–26 November 2024, Astana, Kazakhstan), the WHO Country Office in Kazakhstan presented WHO's strategy

[At least one poison centre in each country: summary for policy makers](#) and joined WHO ECEH in a country dialogue with the FAO and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Health to explore the possibilities of establishing of a national poison centre in Kazakhstan.

WHO workshop in North Macedonia held to revise the national heatwave action plan

On 12 November 2024, health-care experts, Government representatives, nongovernmental organizations and international organizations gathered in Skopje, North Macedonia, for a WHO ECEH-supported workshop to review and refine

the draft of the Second National Heatwave Action Plan for North Macedonia. The workshop focused on strengthening health systems and enhancing early-warning measures in response to escalating exposure to heat and heatwaves.



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Tajikistan advances heat-health action plan

On 18 December 2024, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Public Health Emergencies Centre of Tajikistan organized a national climate change and heat-health seminar and capacity-building session for health professionals at national and local levels, with support from the WHO Country Office

in Tajikistan and the WHO ECEH. The seminar focused on advancing the operationalization of the national action plan to safeguard health from heatwave effects for 2024–2026. The sessions aimed to strengthen response capabilities and adaptation strategies in the face of rising heat-related health risks.

Ukraine virtually hosts a One Health webinar to advance and promote the intersection of environment, public health and animal health

On 14 November 2024, a One Health (virtual) webinar focused on the critical intersection of environment, public health and animal health, underscoring the importance of the environmental sector in promoting and advancing the One Health approach. The event was organized by the WHO Country Office in Ukraine in close collaboration with the WHO ECEH and UNEP.

The webinar attracted a diverse audience: students in environmental science, veterinary medicine and public health, as well as professors, researchers and administrative staff from universities and research institutions. The event provided valuable insights into the growing significance of environmental factors in shaping public health outcomes, fostering greater cooperation across disciplines to address global health challenges. A recording of the webinar is available for download in both English and Ukrainian [here](#).



4. RECENT EVENTS

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

4 November 2024, virtual meeting

A strategic review meeting of the draft communication planning tool for the second, updated edition of the *WHO Heat-health action plans (HHAP): guidance* brought together members of the WHO document development group and invited experts to support the work of WHO ECEH in developing and refining advice on effective communication planning as an integral part of the forthcoming document. The meeting resulted in a set of recommendations and adjustments to improve the proposed communication portfolio, including strategies tailored to vulnerable populations and disseminators to ensure that messages are accessible, relevant and effective.

6-8 November 2024, Geneva, Switzerland

The [29th session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\) Committee on Environmental Policy \(CEP\)](#) concluded with important decisions to advance sustainability in the pan-European Region. The CEP elected its Bureau, approved a [draft outline](#) of a document on the regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure, and agreed to conduct an in-depth review and establish an ad-hoc expert group to develop guidelines for measuring sustainable and resilient infrastructure. It also adopted draft recommendations from the [Fourth Environmental Performance Reviews of Tajikistan and Montenegro](#); endorsed the [Draft programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2025](#); and approved the CEP [meeting schedule](#) until 2027. These decisions reaffirm the Committee's commitment to contributing to the EHP and the implementation of the Budapest Declaration.

18-21 November 2024, Marrakesh, Morocco

The [20th International Conference on Urban Health](#) brought together experts from various parts of the world to discuss the impacts of the climate crisis on urban health and to promote strategies for resilience and sustainability. WHO/Europe representatives led an interactive workshop that focused on how urban planning and design can enhance resilience and reduce the health impacts of urban disasters. For more about the WHO workshop, please see the [abstract book](#) (page 133).



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26-27 November 2024, Bonn, Germany

An expert meeting on the second, updated edition of the HHAP guidance aimed to support the development of national, subnational and local HHAPs, with a focus on risk communication and protecting vulnerable populations. The meeting resulted in a refined draft of the eight core elements of the HHAP guidance document, incorporating expert feedback.

The updated version is more comprehensive, actionable and aligned with the needs of end users, emphasizing primary prevention through urban planning and nature-based solutions to enhance heat-health interventions across various settings.

3-5 December 2024, Bonn, Germany

An expert meeting “Update of Health Risks of Air Pollution in Europe– HRAPIE-2”, convened advisers and members of the systematic review team to engage in discussion and reach consensus on the classification of concentration–response functions for health risk assessment, as well as the exposure ranges to which these concentration–response functions would apply and other relevant information. Discussion outcomes will inform a forthcoming technical report, providing guidance on health impact assessments of air quality policies, including which concentration-response functions to use, applicable exposure ranges, background health data, and accounting for combined exposures to different air pollutants.

11-12 December 2024, Budapest, Hungary

During the [Regional workshop on equitable access to water and sanitation](#), the revised [Equitable Access Score-card 2.0](#) was launched and participants discussed how the newly introduced equity dimensions can be leveraged to align with global and regional water, sanitation, hygiene and health processes. Participants discussed ways on how the UNECE–WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health can better support countries in implementing the relevant equity provisions of the [European Union drinking water directive](#) and the [urban waste water treatment directive](#), particularly considering the specific needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities.



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12-13 December 2024, Budapest, Hungary

The [14th meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting](#) of the UNECE–WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health reviewed progress on target setting under the provisions of the Protocol; launched the sixth reporting cycle and reviewed the features of the new online reporting system; assessed the status of implementation of water, sanitation and hygiene-related Sustainable Development Goal targets; and discussed future priorities for the Protocol's 2026–2028 programme of work.

16 December 2024, virtual meeting

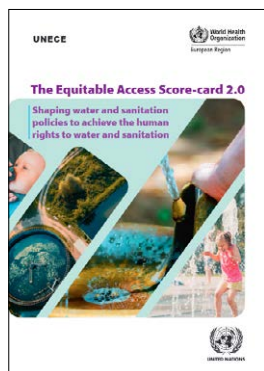
The 13th meeting of the [EHTF](#) Bureau brought together over 70 participants from 30 Member States, eight stakeholder organizations and youth representatives. Participants took stock of the progress made in 2024 in the follow-up to the [Budapest Conference](#), including updates from the [EHTF](#) and [EHP Partnerships](#). They also planned activities and key milestones to be achieved by the [EHP](#) in the implementation of the commitments from the Budapest Declaration in 2025 and beyond.



5. LATEST PUBLICATIONS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING MATERIALS

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

Equitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene



[The Equitable Access Score-card 2.0](#), published under the UNECE–WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health, is an analytical tool to help governments and other stakeholders establish a baseline measure of the equity of access to water and sanitation, identify related priorities, evaluate progress through a process of self-assessment, and discuss further actions.

It builds upon lessons learned in applying the first version of the Score-card across the pan-European Region. The publication contains recommendations on planning the self-assessment and concrete examples of the benefits of using the Score-card 2.0 in different settings. It supports the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 and other global and regional commitments aimed at realizing the human rights to water and sanitation.

Assessment of household air pollution in Kosovo^[1]



The [report](#) highlights the burden of environment-related diseases on health outcomes in Kosovo, explores energy sources, their types and use by households as well as the impact on people's health. The findings demonstrate a robust correlation between using wood for cooking and heating (especially during wintertime) and elevated health concerns.

^[1] All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).



Safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health-care facilities: an overview



This [overview](#) outlines safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health-care facilities along with actionable strategies for their implementing. The overview:

- provides an overview and definitions of safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health-care facilities;
- lists concrete guidance on actions that can be taken to achieve them; and
- directs readers to key materials, resources and tools for detailed guidance and actions.

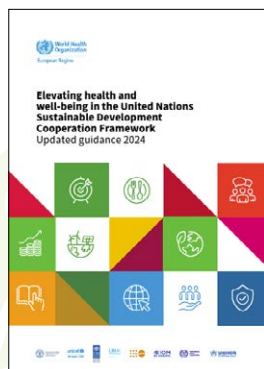
Report of the Regional Director: the work of the WHO Regional Office for Europe in 2023–2024



This [report](#) covers the activities of the WHO/Europe from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. These activities are guided by the European Programme of Work, 2020–2025 – “United Action for Better Health” and the targets of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025.

For more details on the work done under the EHP, check out the chapter on environment, climate change and health!

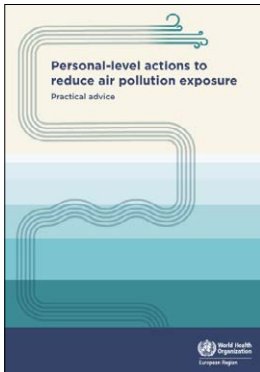
Elevating health and well-being in the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework: updated guidance 2024



This [guidance](#) provides updated recommendations on country-level transformative areas of focus to support and accelerate progress towards achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. It is designed by United Nations agencies and development partners involved in health, development and humanitarian support, helping to mainstream and elevate health and well-being into the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework. It details evidence, explains why health and well-being should be prioritized and invested in, and highlights how they are interconnected with six transition areas.



Personal-level actions to reduce air pollution exposure: Practical advice



This [collection of briefs](#), based on the report [Personal-level actions to reduce air pollution exposure in the WHO European Region](#), distils complex considerations into practical, actionable advice on:

- reducing time spent in air-polluted outdoor environments
- physical activity and air pollution
- portable air cleaners and air pollution
- central air cleaners and air pollution
- respirators and air pollution
- face masks and air pollution
- active transportation, routes and air pollution
- driving styles, vehicle settings and air pollution.

Improved water, sanitation, hygiene and waste services in health-care facilities, Ukraine



This [article](#) published in the [WHO Bulletin journal](#) details the outcomes of an initiative by WHO, in collaboration with Ukraine's Ministry of Health, the Ukrainian Public Health Centre and the regional United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene standards in health-care facilities through the [Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool \(WASH FIT\)](#). Following WHO-led training in December 2022, teams from nine priority health-care facilities conducted assessments and implemented targeted improvement plans in January 2023. Six-month follow-up assessments were conducted to measure the progress and effectiveness of these efforts.



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Mental health interventions in the face of a changing climate

WHO ECEH recently completed a groundbreaking initiative to identify and compile case studies of interventions designed to protect and promote mental health in the face of climate change. This effort shines a light on innovative approaches from across the WHO European Region that address the growing mental health challenges linked to climate impacts.

The collection of case studies aims to showcase diverse strategies targeting various mental health outcomes, including eco-anxiety and functional disorders, in response to climate-related challenges like heatwaves and loss of livelihoods. These interventions range from national to local levels, offering tailored support to different population groups, including youth and frontline workers. They also include a spectrum of mental health and psychosocial support measures – from clinical care to community-strengthening initiatives.

By mapping these interventions, the ECEH aims to build a comprehensive understanding of how communities and organizations are responding to the mental health dimensions of climate change. Stay tuned as we dive into the findings and highlight impactful approaches that inspire action and resilience across the region!



EHP Partnerships

6. EHP PARTNERSHIPS CORNER

Here, in the EHP Partnerships corner, we are excited to share some key highlights of the work being implemented by the lead countries and partners in following-up on the [Budapest commitments](#).

The [EHP Partnerships](#) is a mechanism within the EHP to accelerate national and international implementation of 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.



The latest updates on EHP Partnership work are provided below.

Spotlight on risk reduction in school environments

The first online meeting of the EHP Partnership on Risk Reduction in School Environments (12 November 2024), hosted by Hungary's National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy, brought together representatives from Belarus, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Montenegro and Republic of Moldova.

One of the Partnership's key missions is to address the health and economic burdens of poor indoor air quality and other environmental risks in schools. By highlighting simple yet impactful interventions – like improving

classroom ventilation – the Partnership demonstrates how these measures can enhance both health and learning outcomes.

Discussions emphasized the importance of translating scientific evidence into actionable practices, focusing on holistic solutions that integrate indoor air quality and water, sanitation and hygiene improvements. The Partnership's collaborative spirit sets the stage for tangible progress in creating safer, healthier learning environments across the Region.



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Deep-dive solution exchange on climate-friendly transport in the health sector

The EHP Partnership for Health Sector Climate Action hosted its first deep-dive solutions exchange on climate-friendly transport (5 November 2024), drawing over 100 participants from 35 countries.



The webinar provided a dynamic platform for country representatives and health care-sector experts to explore strategies for reducing transport emissions associated with patient and staff travel, as well as freight. Participants shared valuable insights, lessons learned and actionable solutions tailored to national and sector-specific contexts.

This exchange marks a significant step in advancing sustainable practices within the health sector and underscores the collective commitment to mitigating climate change.

The Partnership has grown to 11 members, now also including Germany, Hungary, Israel, North Macedonia and Spain.



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.

Emissions Gap Report 2024: important insights from UNEP

As climate impacts intensify globally, the [*Emissions Gap Report 2024: No more hot air ... please!*](#) warns that nations must significantly increase their ambition and action in the next round of nationally determined contributions, or the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal will slip out of reach within a few years. This report, the 15th edition in a series, brings together many of the world's leading climate scientists to assess future trends in greenhouse gas emissions and propose potential solutions to the global warming challenge.

Adaptation Gap Report 2024: Come hell and high water

The [*report*](#) finds that nations must dramatically increase climate adaptation efforts, starting with a commitment to act on finance. It calls for nations to step up by adopting a strong new collective quantified goal for climate finance and including stronger adaptation components in their next round of climate pledges, or nationally determined contributions, due in early 2025. There is a need to strengthen capacity building and technology transfer to improve the effectiveness of adaptation actions. The report provides recommendations to improve efforts, which are often uncoordinated, expensive and short term.

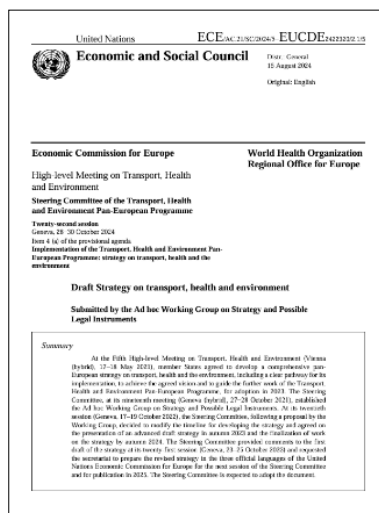
UNEP: A global foresight report on planetary health and human well-being

Eighteen signals of change – identified by hundreds of global experts and distilled through regional and stakeholder consultations that included youth – offer a glimpse into potential disruptions, both positive and negative, that the world must closely monitor. The [*Navigating New Horizons – A global foresight report on planetary health and human wellbeing*](#) outlines how to foster an enabling environment for better decision-making by creating a new social contract, embracing agile and adaptive governance, and increasing integrated accessible data and knowledge.

The report offers a stark reminder of the interconnectedness and fragility of our systems in the 21st century and warns that prioritizing short-term gains over anticipatory action and preparedness jeopardizes long-term prosperity and planetary health. However, it also points to the tremendous potential and human ingenuity, which can be leveraged in the spirit of discovery and cooperation to deliver solutions across the triple crisis.



Pan-European Strategy aims to align transport, health and environment policies by 2050



The [strategy](#), adopted at the 22nd session of the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), lays out a roadmap for the transformation of transport systems by 2050, promoting sustainable urban mobility, cleaner technologies and climate resilience. For more details, please read the [news article](#) on the UNECE website.

The European Environment Agency released new briefings:

(i) The impacts of heat on health: surveillance and preparedness in Europe

This [briefing](#) outlines the status of surveillance for heat-related health impacts and heat-health action plans in 38 European countries. It draws on a survey issued to national public health institutes and published under the [European Climate and Health Observatory](#) initiative.

As climate change accelerates, heatwaves are becoming fiercer, longer and deadlier. This recent briefing underscores the critical need for enhanced heat-health monitoring and preparedness strategies. Alarming data reveals that between 1980 and 2023, heatwaves accounted for 95% of weather-related deaths in Europe.

(ii) Harm to human health from air pollution in Europe: burden of disease status, 2024

This [briefing](#) on the health impacts of air pollution in Europe highlights it as Europe's leading environmental health risk, causing 239 000 premature deaths annually linked to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Despite a 45% reduction since 2005, levels still exceed WHO Air quality [guidelines](#). Country factsheets are available [here](#).



The European Union One Health 2023 Zoonoses report

This [report](#) by the European Food Safety Authority and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control presents the results of zoonoses monitoring and surveillance activities conducted in 2023 across 27 Member States, Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) and 10 non-Member States. Overall, reported cases of zoonotic diseases in humans increased, while foodborne outbreaks saw a slight decline. For more detailed findings, check out the full report.

Health Impacts of Low-carbon Transport in Cities

The [report](#), published by the International Transport Forum/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, promotes a transition to low-carbon mobility that prioritizes environmental goals and human well-being. By evaluating low-carbon policy scenarios, the report offers evidence-based recommendations for policy-makers to integrate health into transport and urban planning. It features insights to invest in active and public transport infrastructure and equity-centred approaches to urban development. It is a roadmap for creating sustainable cities that are healthier, safer and more inclusive.



8. UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

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

[Global workshop on increasing climate resilience with focus on floods and health on the transboundary and national levels](#) (19–20 March 2025, Geneva, Switzerland), jointly organized by the UNECE Water Convention and the UNECE–WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health.

[Second Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health](#) (25–27 March 2025, Cartagena, Colombia). For more, see the [news article](#).

Health community calls for urgent action for clean air

Ahead of the Second WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health in March 2025, the global health community is making an [urgent call](#) to action for clean air, urging governments, business leaders and policy-makers to act swiftly to stop air pollution and save lives.

Add your voice today! Click [here](#) for more information on how to sign the call to action demanding a future with clean air for all.

[UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (2–3 April 2025, Geneva, Switzerland).

[World Health Day](#) (7 April 2025).

The 15th meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (13–14 May 2025, Geneva, Switzerland) followed by the 34th meeting of the Bureau of the UNECE–WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health (15–16 May 2025, Geneva, Switzerland).

The 23rd Session of the Steering Committee of THE PEP (29–31 October 2025, Geneva, Switzerland).

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



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Nature and Health course announcement

The **next course of the WHO Bonn School on Environment and Health will be on “Nature and Health”**, jointly organized by the WHO ECEH and the WHO Collaborating Centre on Natural Environments and Health at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom.

The target audience will be employees of national public institutions with responsibilities related to nature, environment and health.

The course is planned to take place in a **virtual format between 13 October and 10 November 2025**. Course times will be each Monday and Thursday from 9.00–14.30 Central European Time, with additional time to be allocated for reading and review of materials. The course language will be English only.

Further information on course content, applications and related requirements will be made available to the EHTF during spring.

For inquiries on the WHO Bonn School on Environment and Health, please email eurobonnschool@who.int.

Phase II Expression of Interest of the Nature4Health (N4H) project

Announcing the second round of N4H investments

WHO and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, as consortium partners of the global N4H project, are pleased to share that interested governments now have the opportunity to apply by submitting an Expression of Interest for Phase II and join the N4H movement!

Expressions of Interest must be submitted by 24 March 2025.

For more information on project activities, the application process, eligibility requirements and project timelines, please visit the [N4H website](#).

About N4H

N4H promotes country-led, preventative policies and investments in nature that help to reduce health risks. The overall focus of N4H is to address the environmental determinants of health and to strengthen the integration of the environment in the One Health approach and thereby help secure the health of ecosystems, animals, plants and people.



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH PROCESS



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programme

NEWSLETTER

November–December 2024

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