



Third Expert Meeting of the Coalition of Partners to Strengthen Public Health Capacities and Services in the European Region

Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia

2 July 2018

Date: 27–28 November 2018

Original: English

Scope and purpose

Background

Strengthening public health capacities and services has long been identified as a key factor underpinning the implementation of the European regional health policy framework, Health 2020, which since its endorsement by Member States in 2012, has advocated strong intersectoral mechanisms to address the many risk factors and determinants of health related to reducing health inequalities and significantly improving the health and well-being of populations. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development incorporates and extends Health 2020 by strengthening the capacity of Member States to achieve better, more equitable and sustainable health and well-being for everyone throughout the life-course. The cornerstone of implementation for Health 2020 and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals is achieving universal health coverage and better health outcomes in Member States through strong, resilient and people-centred health systems, including strengthening public health functions and capacity.

In operationalizing action by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Member States endorsed the European Action Plan to Strengthen Public Health Capacities and Services in 2012, which aims to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate actions to strengthen public health capacities and services through a broad participatory and consultative process involving all 53 European Member States and main international partners. In 2016, a mid-term progress report on the implementation of the European Action Plan to Strengthen Public Health Capacities and Services was presented at the 66th meeting of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, recommending that additional efforts be invested in engaging partner organizations. In response, the Regional Office launched the Coalition of Partners to Strengthen Public Health Capacities and Services in the European Region (CoP).

The CoP initiative is a collaborative platform that brings together experts and practitioners from within national public health services, international organizations, civil society and academia. The approach is highly participatory and action-oriented, inviting partners to jointly co-create an agenda for action and form solutions to strengthen public health services at the national level while emphasizing the need to take joint responsibility for implementation. In accordance with the recommendations of the 66th meeting of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, the CoP's efforts focus on the

enabler functions of public health services: human resources for public health, financing of public health services, organization and governance of public health services and public health legislation.

The CoP convened for the first time in January 2017 and again in November 2017, hosted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland. As a result, several collaborative projects were initiated as part of its Agenda for Action, including developing tools and delivery of joint capacity-building activities at country level.

Against this backdrop, the Regional Office and Slovenia's Ministry of Health are convening the third meeting of the CoP in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 27–28 November 2018 as a pre-meeting to the 2018 annual European Public Health Conference.

Aims and objectives

The aims of this expert meeting will be:

- to incorporate the experience of CoP partners in implementing the Agenda for Action in European Region countries during 2018;
- to co-create joint activities of the CoP for 2019; and
- to further refine and extend the foundations and partnerships underpinning the work of the CoP.

The objectives for the meeting will be as follows.

- *Learn from country coalitions.* Learn from the experiences of countries such as Slovenia and Poland in their efforts to establish country-based coalitions to build capacity and strengthen public health services. Strategize on how to collectively support this practice and the outcomes reached by these countries as part of efforts to replicate the coalition model in other countries in the European Region.
- *Facilitate technical assistance at the country level.* Evaluate tools identified for strengthening public health services at the country level and secure commitments for country pilots in 2019.
- *Plan and innovate.* Plan and agree on future activities of the CoP at the country and regional levels emphasizing co-creation, innovation, collaboration and shared responsibility for implementation.

Expected outcomes

The expected outcomes from the meeting are:

1. lessons learned from efforts to establish country-level coalitions in European Region countries with a clear focus on strengthening national health systems and public health services through processes of institutional reform, developing the public health workforce and strengthening legislative and financial frameworks;
2. concrete proposals to further strengthen existing country coalitions while creating opportunities for new countries to initiate coalitions in 2019–2020;
3. concrete proposals for country-level pilots of the various tools developed by the CoP and proposals for new tools to facilitate strengthening of national public health services; and
4. a further matured CoP with:
 - a. an improved understanding of how country coalitions are being leveraged as a mechanism to strengthen national health systems and improve public health capacity in countries
 - b. strengthened relationships between partners

- c. an expanded number of countries actively engaged in establishing their own country coalitions for strengthening public health services
- d. adopting a learning and evaluation framework as a key component in implementing the European Action Plan to Strengthen Public Health Capacities and Services.

Format

This expert meeting will take place over two days in Ljubljana, Slovenia and follow a highly participatory workshop format established under previous meetings of the CoP. The emphasis will be on professionally facilitated sessions that enable interactive exchange of ideas and learning, co-creation of joint activities and partnership building. The working languages of the meeting will be English and Russian, with simultaneous interpretation provided.