



Better health. Better Environment. Sustainable Choices.

**Sixth Ministerial Conference
on Environment and Health**

Ostrava, Czech Republic

13–15 June 2017

EURO/Ostrava2017/2

28 February 2017

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Scope and purpose

The ministerial conferences of the European Environment and Health Process provide a unique intersectoral policy platform bringing together relevant sectors and partners to shape policies and actions on environment and health, to support the implementation of effective evidence-based policies and to advance actions on environment, health and well-being in the WHO European Region.¹

Almost one and a half million deaths per year in the WHO European Region, equivalent to 16% of all deaths and of the total burden of diseases, are caused by environmental risks that could be avoided and/or eliminated. There is therefore an urgent need to continue and strengthen the efforts to address the leading environmental determinants of ill health, such as air pollution, inadequate water and sanitation services, hazardous chemicals, waste, contaminated sites and climate change. The budgetary constraints of Member States, socioeconomic and gender inequalities, extreme climate events, and increases in noncommunicable diseases, the ageing of the population and an unprecedented level of migration between and within countries in the Region exacerbate those challenges. The complex relationships between environmental, biological, demographic, economic, social and other factors call for improving the resilience of communities to the physical, natural and social pressures of the 21st century.

Participants in the Sixth Ministerial Conference will discuss new responses to these multiple challenges. The responses must take into account evidence demonstrating that preserving the integrity of the environment at the global level is essential to the survival of humankind. They should also recognize the cross-border nature of environmental challenges; the necessity to focus actions not only at the national level, but also at the subnational and city levels; the compelling importance of identifying the most vulnerable; and the need for good governance, which includes involving stakeholders and citizens.

By focusing on the creation of supportive environments and resilient communities – one of the pillars of the WHO European policy for health and well-being (Health 2020) – the Sixth Ministerial

¹ The First Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health was held in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1989, and was followed by conferences in Helsinki, Finland, in 1994, London, United Kingdom, in 1999, Budapest, Hungary, in 2004, and Parma, Italy, in 2010, where the first-ever time-bound targets on leading environment and health risk factors in Europe were adopted, together with a renewed institutional framework for the European Environment and Health Process.

Conference aims to position the European Environment and Health Process as a platform for implementing selected and relevant environment and health goals and targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in the European Region.

The Conference is organized by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in close partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Environment Programme, and is generously hosted by the Government of the Czech Republic, the Moravian-Silesian Region and the City of Ostrava.

The European Environment and Health Task Force, supported by its Ad-hoc Working Group, served as the steering body for the preparation of this Conference.² The priorities for the Sixth Ministerial Conference were identified and negotiated through a broad, inclusive consultation process initiated at the High-Level Mid-term Review Meeting in Haifa, Israel, in 2015.

At the Conference, Member States will adopt a declaration negotiated through a broad, inclusive consultative process, which will include an action plan for its implementation and agreement on revised institutional arrangements for the European Environment and Health Process after 2017.

In particular, the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health aims to:

- (1) take stock of the state of health and environment in Europe and of major trends and concerns of today and tomorrow;
- (2) review progress and challenges in achieving the commitments taken at previous Conferences, renewing the commitment of Member States to attain the targets agreed in Parma in 2010;
- (3) position the European Environment and Health Process as a platform for implementing the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and for existing commitments and international obligations, such as relevant World Health Assembly and WHO Regional Committee resolutions, as well as strengthening synergies with multilateral environmental agreements and relevant policy platforms;
- (4) inspire, support and expand actions, through the adoption of national portfolios for action by all Member States, which will address national environment and health priorities advised by a proposed set of evidence-based effective actions;
- (5) adopt a renewed institutional framework for the European Environment and Health Process, strengthening links to WHO and UNECE governing bodies, enhancing collaboration between WHO, UNECE and UNEP, working closer with subnational and local authorities, and promoting whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

Further information is available on the website of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health at <http://www.euro.who.int/en/Ostrava2017>.

The Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health is hosted by:



² The European Environment and Health Task Force brings together a unique coalition of representatives of health and environment ministries of the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and youth representatives.