



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ  
WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION  
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ

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Date: 19 July 2017

Circular letter to Ministers of Health and Ministers  
of Environment in the WHO European Region

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health Ostrava, Czech Republic, 13–15 June 2017**

I am extremely pleased to report to you on the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, generously hosted by the Government of the Czech Republic, the Moravian-Silesian Region and the City of Ostrava in June 2017.

Acknowledging that environmental risk factors in the WHO European Region are estimated to cause 1.4 million deaths each year, most of which are preventable, the Sixth Ministerial Conference defined a renewed environment and health agenda for the European Region by adopting the Ostrava Declaration. Among its achievements, the Declaration:

- leverages the European Environment and Health Process as a mechanism for achieving the environment- and health-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for implementing Health 2020;
- renews the commitment to address the gaps and needs pertaining to environment and health that persist in the European Region;
- commits to promoting coherence across all policy levels and to developing platforms to facilitate dialogue at the international, national and subnational levels of policy-making;
- commits to enhancing national implementation by the end of 2018 through the development of national portfolios of actions on environment and health that take into account national priorities, means and capacities.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of Conference commitments and to advance the environment and health agenda nationally, each Member State is encouraged to establish a mechanism or body – or to designate an existing one – within its own constitutional framework to lead the intersectoral coordination of the health and environment sectors with other relevant sectors, and across all levels of national governance.

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At the Ministerial Conference, Member States adopted revised institutional arrangements for the European Health and Environment Process. Under the new arrangements, the European Environment and Health Task Force will be the single coordinating body and will oversee the implementation and follow-up of Conference commitments at the international level.

In order to advance the implementation of the new arrangements, the Regional Office for Europe is pleased to invite you to nominate:

- a focal point (one from the environment sector and one from the health sector) in line with section V (paragraphs 11–13) of Annex 2 of the Ostrava Declaration. The focal points will be members of the European Environment and Health Task Force. They will represent and speak on behalf of the government of the nominating Member State and will serve as the primary points of communication between the EHP Secretariat and the Member State. The focal points should be officials at the strategic policy and/or high technical level. Nominations should be regularly updated and communicated to the EHP Secretariat in writing in a timely fashion, and will come into force upon receipt by the EHP Secretariat.
- a representative to the Working Group on Health in Climate (HIC), established under section VI (paragraph 21.a) of Annex 2 of the Ostrava Declaration.

The preferred deadline for receiving nominations of **national focal points is no later than 30 September 2017**. Each nomination should include complete contact information of the nominee and should be sent by email to the EHP Secretariat ([EUCEH@who.int](mailto:EUCEH@who.int)).

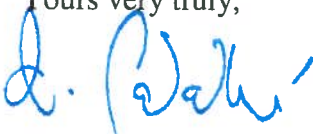
The next meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force, tentatively planned for mid-2018, will be the first opportunity to report progress on the development and implementation of national portfolios and to identify which priority area(s) to focus on in the WHO European Region.

The Regional Office is fully prepared to support Member States with the follow-up to Conference commitments. The WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Bonn, Germany, will be a particularly useful resource in that regard.

Details of the Ministerial Conference, including all documentation, are available on the Regional Office website (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2017/06/sixth-ministerial-conference-on-environment-and-health/documentation>).

Please accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

Yours very truly,



Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab  
Regional Director

**Enclosures:**

Ostrava Declaration

Annex 1. Compendium of possible actions to advance the implementation of the Ostrava Declaration

Annex 2. Institutional arrangements for the European Environment and Health Process