



Brussels, 4 February 2021

**Memorandum of Understanding between the
European Committee of the Regions (CoR)
and the
WHO Regional Office for Europe**

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The World Health Organization ("WHO"), an intergovernmental organisation established by its Member States, is the directing and coordinating agency for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.
- 1.2 The WHO is represented in the European Region comprising 53 countries by the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) and has public health, scientific and technical experts based in the main office in Copenhagen, Denmark, in decentralised centres and in country offices in its Member States.

The European Committee of the Regions ("CoR") is the European Union advisory body composed by local and regional authorities, as mentioned in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. As political assembly of regional and local representatives, its mission is to provide institutional representation for all the EU's territorial areas, regions, cities and municipalities.

- 1.3 Recognising the benefits of genuine, substantive cooperation between CoR and WHO/Europe and desirous of further enhancing and strengthening such cooperation, the Parties have entered into this Memorandum of Understanding.

They wish to strengthen collaboration in areas of mutual interests to enhance the health policy dialogue and bring forward the efforts to help meet major health challenges.

Purpose

The main purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to outline the areas of cooperation and the cooperation mechanism between the CoR and WHO/Europe. It expresses a joint commitment to the formulation of a concrete partnership on the basis of the general principles and objectives contained herein, recognising health as a major investment for sustainable human, economic and social

development. For WHO/Europe and the CoR, there are a number of guiding principles of this cooperation.

For the WHO:

- fostering inter-sectoral cooperation ensuring implementation of health issues across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emanating from the "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development";
- the European Programme of Work, 2020–2025 – "United Action for Better Health in Europe" (EPW) of WHO/Europe.

For the CoR:

- The CoR political priorities 2020-2025 and its annual work programmes;
- The Programme for the Union's action in the field of health –for the period 2021-2027 ("EU4Health Programme").

These are the cornerstones of the cooperation determined in this MoU, whose promotion and strengthening will be resulting from the Action Plan in Appendix I.

2.Focal areas of cooperation

Without prejudice to cooperation in other health-related fields, the Parties have identified and agreed to cooperate in the following areas:

1. Moving towards Universal Health Coverage;
2. Protecting against health emergencies/building resilient communities;
3. Promoting health and well-being;
4. The Mental Health Coalition;
5. Empowerment through Digital Health;
6. The European Immunization Agenda 2030;
7. Healthier behaviours: incorporating behavioural and cultural insights.

3.Means

The joint cooperation in the above agreed areas can be undertaken through already existing tools and instruments of both CoR and WHO/Europe:

- 3.1 Collaboration, including with subnational and local authorities, through the commission for Natural Resources (NAT), Regions for Health and Healthy Cities Network;
- 3.2 Consultation and exchange of relevant information and documents and activities, including through study visits and on-site workshops;
- 3.3 Promotion and raising awareness among national, regional and local authorities, as appropriate, and other relevant institutions and organisations, including on the need for active involvement of all in the design and implementation of public health measures and programmes, and on effective and efficient public health policies and solutions;

3.4 Promotion of policy and sharing of good practice at the local and regional level within the European Union and beyond;

3.5 Collaboration on relevant advocacy and communication campaigns, programmes and activities;

3.6 Invitation to relevant meetings of the Parties.

4. Responsible entities in CoR and WHO/Europe

Within the CoR, the responsible department for the implementation and monitoring of the Memorandum of Understanding is the NAT commission and its secretariat.

The responsible department within WHO/Europe is WHO Representation to the European Union (WEU) and Resource Mobilization and Strategic Alliances (RMA) unit.

5. Entry into force

This Memorandum enters into force on a day of its signing by the authorised Representatives of both parties. At the time when this Memorandum enters into force, both parties inform their staff.

6. Modus Operandi

Each two years by 31 October, the parties will have developed and agreed on a joint activity plan of following years. Every other year, the cooperation between the parties will be reviewed jointly.

7. Confidentiality

It is acknowledged that each party may possess confidential information, which is proprietary to it or to third parties collaborating with it. Any such information shall only be shared between the parties under a separate confidential disclosure agreement, specifically covering such information.

8. Liability

Each party shall be solely responsible for the manner in which it carries out its part of the collaborative activities under this Memorandum of Understanding. Thus, a party shall not be responsible for any loss, accident, damage or injury suffered or caused by the other party, or that other party's staff or sub-contractors, in connection with, or as a result of, the collaboration under this Memorandum of Understanding.

9. Publications

9.1 Subject to each party's proprietary rights and/or the proprietary rights of others, and without prejudice to obligations of confidentiality, the results of any collaborative activity under this Memorandum of Understanding may be published by either party. The PARTIES are encouraged to publish the results of their joint work in a collaborative fashion. Guidelines for authorship of major, international, peer-reviewed journals will be used to establish authorship of collaborative

publications. In regard to separate publications, it is agreed that in order to avoid prejudicing proprietary rights and the confidentiality of information, the publishing party shall transmit to the other party for its review the material intended to be published at least 60 days before a proposed publication is submitted to any editor, publisher, referee or meeting organiser. In the absence of any objection by the other party within that 60-day period, concerning prejudice to proprietary rights or confidentiality of information, the publication may proceed. Any publication as referred to above shall duly acknowledge both parties. In addition to review of the content of publications as referred to above, each party shall have the right to review the acknowledgement and request reasonable changes to the use of its name, or request that its name be deleted altogether. The parties agree that the use of logos shall be sought on every joint event or products and materials.

9.2 Copyright in any jointly prepared publications resulting from or relating to any of the collaborative activities under this Memorandum of Understanding shall be vested in WHO/Europe and CoR jointly, who shall each independently and severally be entitled to exploit such copyright in any manner and for any purpose as they may each in their sole discretion deem appropriate, except that no use shall be made of such publications for or in conjunction with commercial and/or promotional purposes.

9.3 Copyright in any publications resulting from or relating to any of the collaborative activities under this Memorandum of Understanding, and prepared by one of the parties hereto on its own, shall be vested in that party, provided however, that any such publication shall be submitted to the other party for review and comments in accordance with paragraph 9.1. above.

10. Use of the parties' names

Except as explicitly provided in this Memorandum of Understanding, neither party shall, in any statement or material of a promotional nature, refer to the relationship of the other party to the collaboration pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding, or otherwise use the other party's name, acronym and/or emblem, without the prior written consent of the other party.

11. Amendments

This Memorandum of Understanding may only be amended in writing by mutual consent of the parties.

12. Termination

Any party is within its right to terminate this Memorandum having notified the other party in writing six months prior to termination. It is agreed that any termination of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be without prejudice to: (i) the orderly completion of any ongoing collaborative activity; and (ii) any other rights and obligations of the parties accrued prior to the date of termination of this Memorandum of Understanding.

13. Privileges and immunities

Nothing in or relating to this MOU shall be deemed a waiver of any of the privileges and immunities of WHO in conformity with the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies

approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 21, 1947 or otherwise under any national or international law, convention or agreement.

Two copies are signed.

Agreed and accepted: 4 February 2021

President
European Committee of the Regions

Regional Director
World Health Organization

Following the discussion between WHO/EURO Regional Director, Dr Hans Kluge, and CoR President, Apostolos Tzitzikostas on **29 September 2020, both organisations agreed** to strengthen the relationship based on the new political priorities of the CoR 2020-2025 and WHO/EURO's new European Programme of Work.

The joint preparations will be initiated at Secretariat level for a next two-year action plan in view of signing the new document at the CoR plenary meeting in February 2021. A field visit to WHO Europe's Copenhagen office could be envisaged when possible, with a view to to deepen the knowledge of the current work of WHO Europe and the CoR and have insight on priorities and challenges in the short- and medium- term, as well as to explore further opportunities for collaborative efforts of engaging LRAs and renew the joint action plan.

Process

- Step 1. WHO/WEU and CoR to develop a draft template to be further populated by 6 November
- Step 2. WHO/EURO and CoR receive internal feedback by 4 December
- Step 3. Consolidate input by 18 December
- Step 4. Signing ceremony February 2021

To be noted: It might be difficult to complete the activities for 2022 as plans are not as fully defined. In this light, WHO/EURO and CoR might consider, by the end of 2021, to review planned activities and further consolidate the work plan as needed.

Agreed activities during the meeting on 29 September:

- WHO Europe has been invited to become an observer in the CoR interregional group for health.
- WHO/EURO to provide technical input to the CoR opinions on health related matters
- Explore the possibilities of the CoR and the WHO working together on the lessons learnt from COVID-19 and on the recovery from crisis i.e. through the CoR exchange platform

European Committee of the Regions – World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

JOINT ACTION PLAN 2021-2022

The overall objective of the development of the Action Plan is to strengthen the implementation and coordination of research-based health policy and practice at the local level in Europe. This is in line with the goals and targets set out by the WHO European Programme of Work 2020–2025 – "United Action for Better Health in Europe", as well as with the political priorities of the European Committee of the Regions and the annual work programme of its commission for Natural Resources (NAT). In order to do so, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) agree to extend standing invitations to each other for participation in the annual WHO Regional Committee Meetings and the Commission for Natural Resources meetings, and to jointly promote their respective work.

Focal Areas of Cooperation	Activities	Tentative dates	Means/Tools	Organisation
Moving towards Universal Health Coverage	WHO input on the CoR work on the EU pharmaceutical strategy	Q1 2021	Meeting with the Rapporteur / policy debate	CoR
	World Antimicrobial Awareness Week	18-24 November 2021	Joint press release, social media	WHO/Europe
Protecting against health emergencies / building resilient communities	Meeting on health security anchor in communities	Prior to CoR plenary session	Working group/brainstorm meeting	WHO/Europe
	WHO Europe participation in CoR plenary session to debate health and recovery from COVID-19 with cities and regions	February 2021	WHO Europe Regional Director to participate in high-level debate	CoR

	WHO input in the CoR outlook opinion on "Experiences and lessons learnt by regions and cities from the COVID-19 crisis"	NAT Commission meeting, March 2021	Good practice presentation and participation in policy debate	CoR
	WHO input in the CoR work on "a European Health Union"	Q1 2021	Good practice presentation and participation in policy debate or meeting with the rapporteur	CoR
	WHO input in the CoR opinion on cross-border health threats	Q1 2021	Good practice presentation and participation in policy debate	CoR
Promoting health and well-being				
	Participation of CoR rapporteur in Health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) Europe 2021 Conference	1–3 September 2021, Nice,	Presentation of key CoR priorities in the field of health promotion and physical activity	WHO/Europe
	WHO participation in the NAT opinion on Europe's beating cancer plan	First half of 2021	Meeting with the Rapporteur/policy debate	CoR
	WHO Europe participation in the work of CoR interregional group on health and well-being	Q1 2021	Meeting and presentation of priorities in this area	CoR
	Cooperation on the European Environment and Health process	tbc	Collaboration through the Working Group on Collaboration of Local and Subnational Authorities (CoLSA)	WHO/Europe

	WHO Health Cities Network	First half of 2021	Meeting on joint priorities and activities	WHO/Europe
The Mental Health Coalition	CoR participation in mental health coalition meeting	Q3 2021	Conference	WHO/Europe
Empowerment through Digital Health	WHO input in the CoR work on European Health Data space	End of 2021/ early 2022	Policy debate within the NAT commission meeting or meeting with the rapporteur	CoR
	Joint meeting and communication activity	2021	Meeting and joint communication activity	WHO/Europe
The European Immunization Agenda 2030	Discussion with members of the CoR and relevant WHO team on concrete actions during a visit to the WHO Regional Office	tbc	On-site workshop or online meeting	CoR and WHO/Europe
Healthier behaviours: incorporating behavioural and cultural insights	Discussion with members of CoR and relevant WHO team on concrete actions during a visit to the WHO Regional Office	tbc	On-site workshop or online meeting	WHO/Europe
Committee of the Regions	CoR participation in the 26th meeting of the Regions for Health Network	tbc	Agree on involvement, as specific spot can be assigned.	WHO/Europe

	CoR participation in the flagship initiatives of the RHN (will mirror the flagship of the WHO/Europe European Programme of Work (EPW))	tbc	tbc	WHO/Europe
	CoR to participate in the collection of micro-level case studies on real practices in the areas of the flagships and/or RHN areas of interest e.g., environment and health, sustainable development	tbc	Case studies	WHO/Europe
	Joint capacity-building events, following the COVIDnar series, e.g. on the EPW flagships and Covid-19	tbc	Webinar	WHO/Europe
Other events	CoR participation in WHO/EURO Regional Committee –71st session	13–15 September 2021, Copenhagen, Denmark	Conference	WHO/Europe
	WHO/Europe participation in the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC) 2022	October 2022	WHO/Europe – CoR joint event on (theme tbc once EWRC topics published)	CoR