

## 74th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

*Provisional Agenda item 4 (October 29, 2024; 11:15 – 13:00h)  
“Report of the Regional Director: the work of the WHO Regional  
Office for Europe in 2023–2024” (EUR/RC74/4)*

### Joint Statement by Non-State Actors

Dear Regional Director Dr Kluge, esteemed delegates, dear colleagues,

The European Public Health Alliance, on behalf of seventeen other civil society organisations, warmly welcomes Dr Kluge’s report. We deeply appreciate WHO Europe’s leadership in navigating the difficult terrain of managing pandemic recovery, the climate emergency, antimicrobial resistance, noncommunicable diseases, and the devastating impact of wars. This courageous work deserves commendation.

Among the standout achievements is WHO Europe’s relentless pursuit of **Universal Health Coverage**. By prioritising equitable healthcare access, particularly for vulnerable populations, WHO has laid the foundation for more resilient health systems across the region, with the potential of the **Novel Medicines Platform** to further advance this agenda. We encourage WHO Europe to keep addressing **racism and discrimination** as fundamental determinants of health.

Acknowledging WHO’s leadership in **NCD prevention**, we especially value the work addressing the **commercial determinants of health**, and the groundbreaking **Redefine Alcohol** campaign. However, lobbying by health-harming industries continues to challenge robust policy implementation, underscoring the need for stronger regulation. Civil society offers its indispensable support in counteracting commercial interests, and, two years since the adoption of the Regional alcohol policy framework, calls for a Regional Director report to discuss progress in advancing the alcohol policy best buys.



In tackling **AMR**, WHO Europe has made substantial progress through global collaboration and policy dialogues. Efforts to support countries in developing national action plans and forming multi-sectoral partnerships are critical, and the integration of AMR into broader health security frameworks is essential.

We also commend the growing focus on **climate change and environmental health**. WHO's partnerships, guidance on integrating environmental health into national policies, and new platforms for health sector climate action are essential. Civil society will continue to be a key driver of progress in this area, and we remain committed to supporting your initiatives.

The increasing **recognition of civil society** in WHO's work is particularly encouraging. The establishment of the Civil Society Commission in Geneva marks a critical step forward, and the commitment to NSA engagement by WHO Euro is highly appreciated. That said, we encourage WHO and Member States to further invest in structured inclusion and funding for civil society, honouring their own commitment made through the WHA Resolution on Social Participation. This support will ensure that civil society organisations can continue to serve as a vital counterbalance to commercial interests, advocate for health as a priority on the European agenda, and deliver support to the communities.

We also must address the issue of **underinvestment in the WHO**. Resource limitations continue to hinder the organisation's ability to fully implement its programmes, particularly in light of global crises. We urge Member States in the Euro region to step up their financial support, ensuring that WHO has the resources needed to safeguard public health. The recent investment rounds are a positive step, and we call for continued commitment in this area.

Finally, we call on Dr Kluge, WHO Europe, and especially Member States to implement a whole-of-government approach and ensure that health remains an unwavering European policy priority.

We look forward to continuing our partnership for a healthier and more equitable future.

Thank you.



Signatories:

1. European Association for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion / EUROSAFE
2. European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians
3. European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Association
4. European Independent Foundation in Angiology / Vascular Medicine
5. European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention
6. European Patients' Forum
7. European Public Health Alliance
8. European Respiratory Society
9. European Stroke Organisation
10. International Diabetes Federation - Europe
11. International Federation of Biomedical Laboratory Science
12. International Federation of Medical Students' Associations
13. International Sport and Culture Association
14. Movendi International
15. Romanian Society of Pneumology
16. World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists
17. World Organization of Family Doctors – Europe

