
Health promoting schools in the context of the new strategy for child and adolescent health and well-being in the WHO European Region

Dr Sophie Jullien

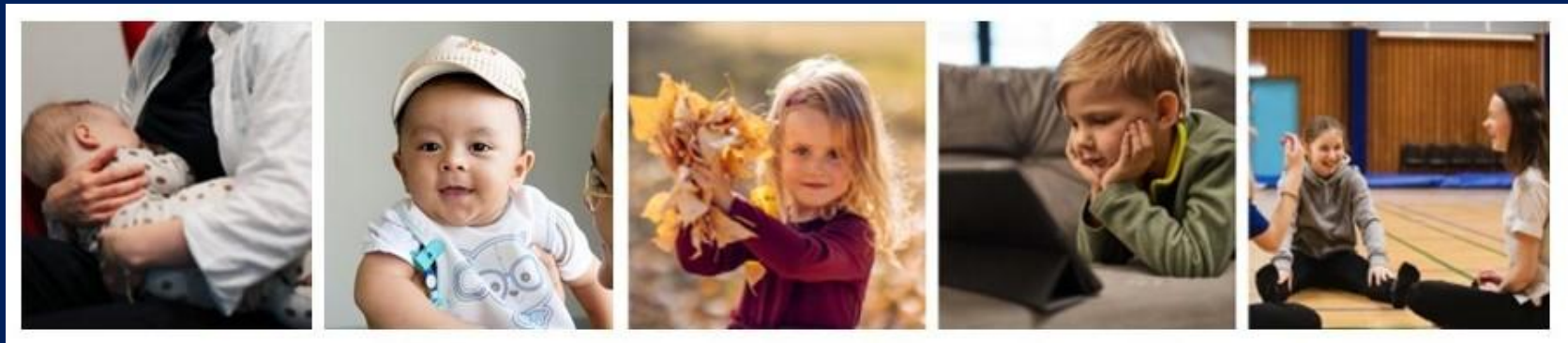
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WHO Regional Office for Europe




**World Health
Organization**

European Region



A healthy start for a healthy life

 **World Health Organization**
European Region

Regional Committee for Europe
75th session

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A healthy start for a healthy life: a strategy for child and adolescent health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030

The draft strategy *A healthy start for a healthy life: a strategy for child and adolescent health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030*, developed jointly by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), aims to support Member States working to enhance the health and well-being of children and adolescents from infancy to adulthood, improving their lives and thereby their life opportunities. It does so in the context of a period of significant change and unprecedented health challenges. The strategy identifies five priority areas for action:

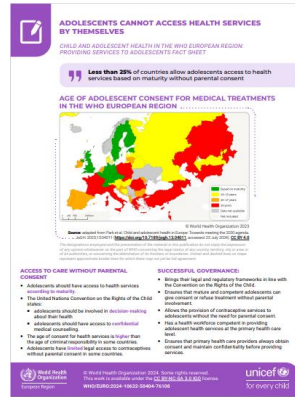
- investing strategically in child and adolescent health and well-being for long-term benefits;
- delivering comprehensive and equitable high-quality health care specific to the needs of children and adolescents;
- regulating to protect children and adolescents against the harmful effects of commercial goods and services;
- fostering a multisectoral approach for comprehensive child and adolescent health policies; and
- monitoring progress for accountability.

Each priority area includes a set of concrete actions to tackle Region-specific causes of mortality and morbidity and drive improved health outcomes for children and adolescents.

The draft strategy will be submitted for consideration to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its 75th session.



Updates



Electronic supplementary material:
The online version of this article contains supplementary material.

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Priorities for child and adolescent health in Europe and Central Asia: insights to inform regional strategy from a multi-stakeholder survey

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Refocusing on the foundations: strategy for child and adolescent health in Europe and Central Asia 2026–2030 – A healthy start for a healthy life

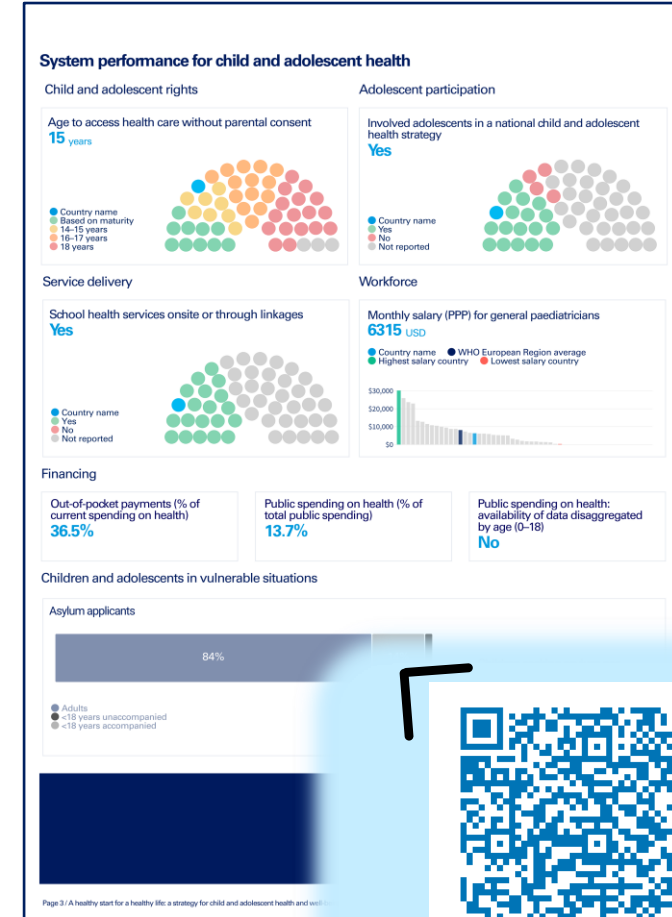
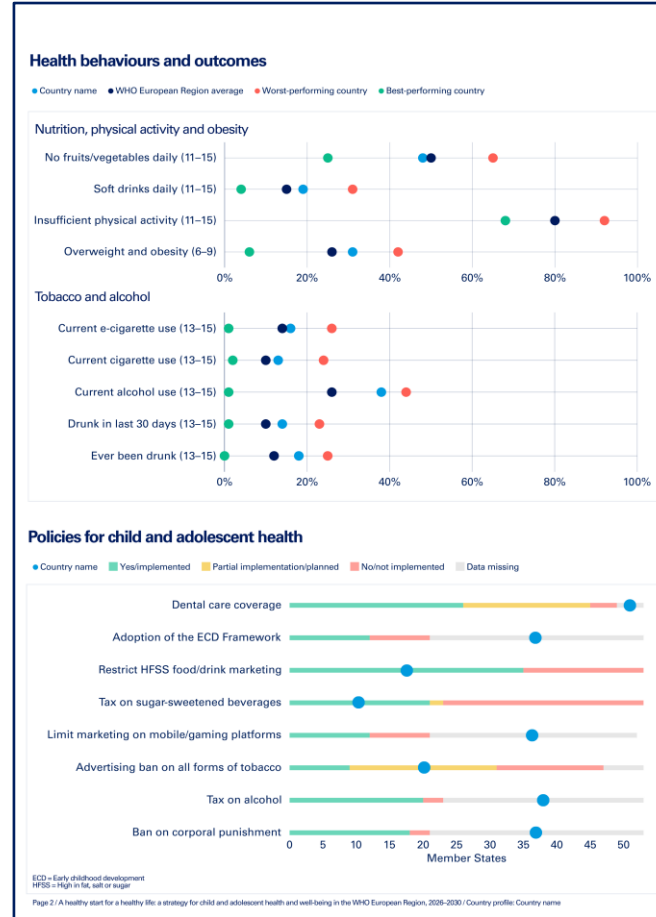
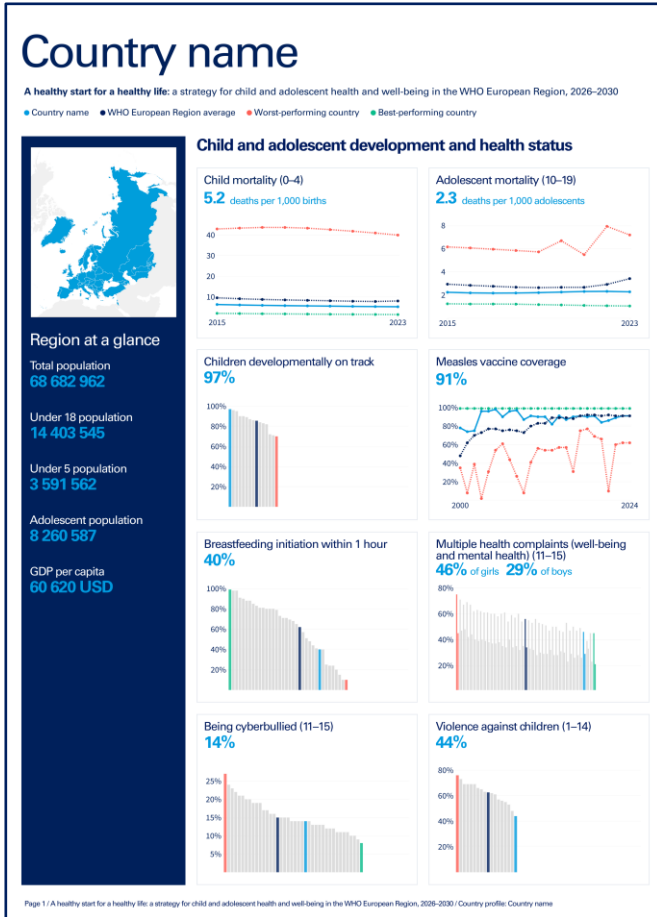
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Country profiles



European Region



SCAN ME



INVEST in EARLY YEARS

All children and adolescents realize their rights to physical, mental, and social health and well-being



PROTECTING



MULTI-SECTORAL ENGAGEMENT



HIGH-QUALITY CARE

MONITORING

Multisectoral engagement

Fostering a **multisectoral** approach for comprehensive child and adolescent health policies

- Child health outcomes are determined by sectors beyond health: **education**, sports, sanitation, nutrition, urban planning, transport and social welfare



- Policies and mechanisms (cross-ministry units) to ensure multisectoral coordination on the implementation and budgeting of CAHW measures
- **Health promoting schools and pre-schools approach**
- Health personnel are present in or connected to schools
- Fostering social connectedness among adolescents through schools
- Improving **health literacy** for parents and caregivers

Multisectoral engagement



➤ Health promoting schools and pre-schools approach

- (a) Adopt, strengthen and expand the **health-promoting schools approach**; conduct a baseline assessment and establish targets for its expansion until every preschool and school becomes a health-promoting school.
- (b) Establish **life skills development** and skills-based health education, including comprehensive health behaviour and sexuality education, **within school curricula**.
- (c) Develop and implement **policies** for **nicotine- and tobacco-free schools**.
- (d) Promote an alcohol-free school environment and restrict foods high in fat, salt and sugar in schools.
- (e) Ensure that **health personnel** are present in or connected to schools and strengthen their roles and capacities. This could apply to school nurses, school psychologists, mental health counsellors, health promotion counsellors and health–education liaison staff.
- (f) Strengthen **collaboration** among governments, health organizations, schools and communities to create cultures that prioritize the needs of children and adolescents in policy, financing and practice.
- (g) Establish **outreach activities** for out-of-school children and adolescents to ensure they have access to health, education and social services.
- (h) Foster **social connectedness** among adolescents through school, community and mentoring programmes, and inclusive activities that build resilience and a sense of belonging.
- (i) Create programmes that build **intergenerational connections** to foster mutual support, knowledge exchange and community ties.
- (j) Create child- and adolescent-friendly environments, promoting the **WHO European Healthy Cities Network** and implementing measures such as access to green spaces and road safety improvements.
- (k) Coordinate action across all sectors through policies and programmes, and build public awareness to prevent and protect children and adolescents **from all forms of violence**.
- (l) Improve **health literacy** for parents and caregivers by offering parenting courses from early childhood through adolescence, implementing health literacy programmes and raising awareness through community campaigns.

Gateways to improving child and adolescent health and well-being



Key issues of concern	Health-promoting schools and preschools	Primary health care fit for children and adolescents	Conducive policies and environments	Engagement of children and adolescents
ECD	Promotion of ECD development in preschools	ECD promotion and monitoring, assessment and early intervention	Multisectoral policies aligning health, education and social services	--
Immunization	Promotion of knowledge on immunization to build trust in science and public health	Age-appropriate vaccinations, follow-up and counselling	Evidence-based immunization calendar	Child and adolescent-developed materials and digital content
Breastfeeding	Promotion of knowledge on breastfeeding and nutrition	Breastfeeding support and counselling	Enforcement of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes; maternity protection policies	--
Nutrition, physical activity, healthy habits and healthy environment	Promotion of healthy lifestyles, nutritious food and activity	Growth monitoring and counselling	Taxes, regulation of marketing and labelling, active urban planning	Child and adolescent-led advocacy on movement and healthy body image
NCDs	Laying the foundations for lifelong habits	Screening for risk factors, early intervention	Taxes, healthy environments for CAHW, best buys	Children and adolescents involvement in shaping their environments

Gateways to improving child and adolescent health and well-being

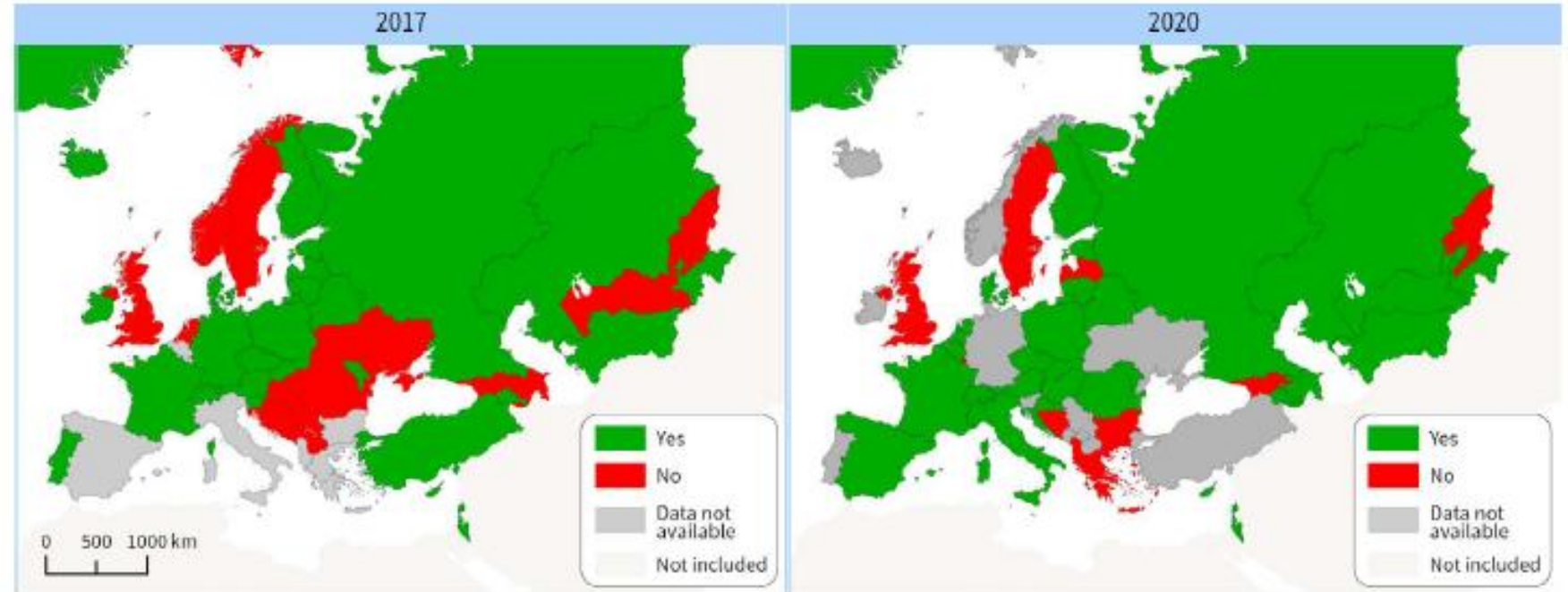
Key issues of concern	Health-promoting schools and preschools	Primary health care fit for children and adolescents	Conducive policies and environments	Engagement of children and adolescents
Impact of digital technology	Digital literacy, promotion of safe and responsible online behaviour	Addressing overuse, cyberbullying and mental health concerns	Regulation of digital marketing, guidance on age-appropriate screen time and content	Children and adolescents are part of the solution
Mental health and well-being	Promotion of resilience, social support and safe spaces	Early detection and continuity of care	Child and adolescent mental health services included in health insurance/benefits packages	Child and adolescent -informed services and de-stigmatizing campaigns
Tobacco and nicotine products, and alcohol	Building of refusal skills and safe environments	Confidential services and early intervention	Protective legislation, taxes, labelling, availability, advertising restrictions	Peer education and experience-sharing
Child maltreatment and sexual and intimate partner violence	Building of resilience, promotion of respectful relationships	Detection of abuse, first-line response	Legal protections	Advocacy and reporting channels for children and adolescents
Sexual and reproductive health and rights	Age-appropriate inclusive education	Adolescent-friendly, confidential sexual and reproductive health services	Policies ensuring access based on maturity	Adolescent participation in service design and delivery
Children and adolescents in vulnerable situations	Support for children in vulnerable situations	Provision of services according to need	Universal access, additional support for higher needs	Inclusion of child and adolescent voices in health and equity discussions

Next steps

Guidance, support for country implementation, research, what works, what does not work, knowledge exchange, monitoring progress

→ **Your experience**

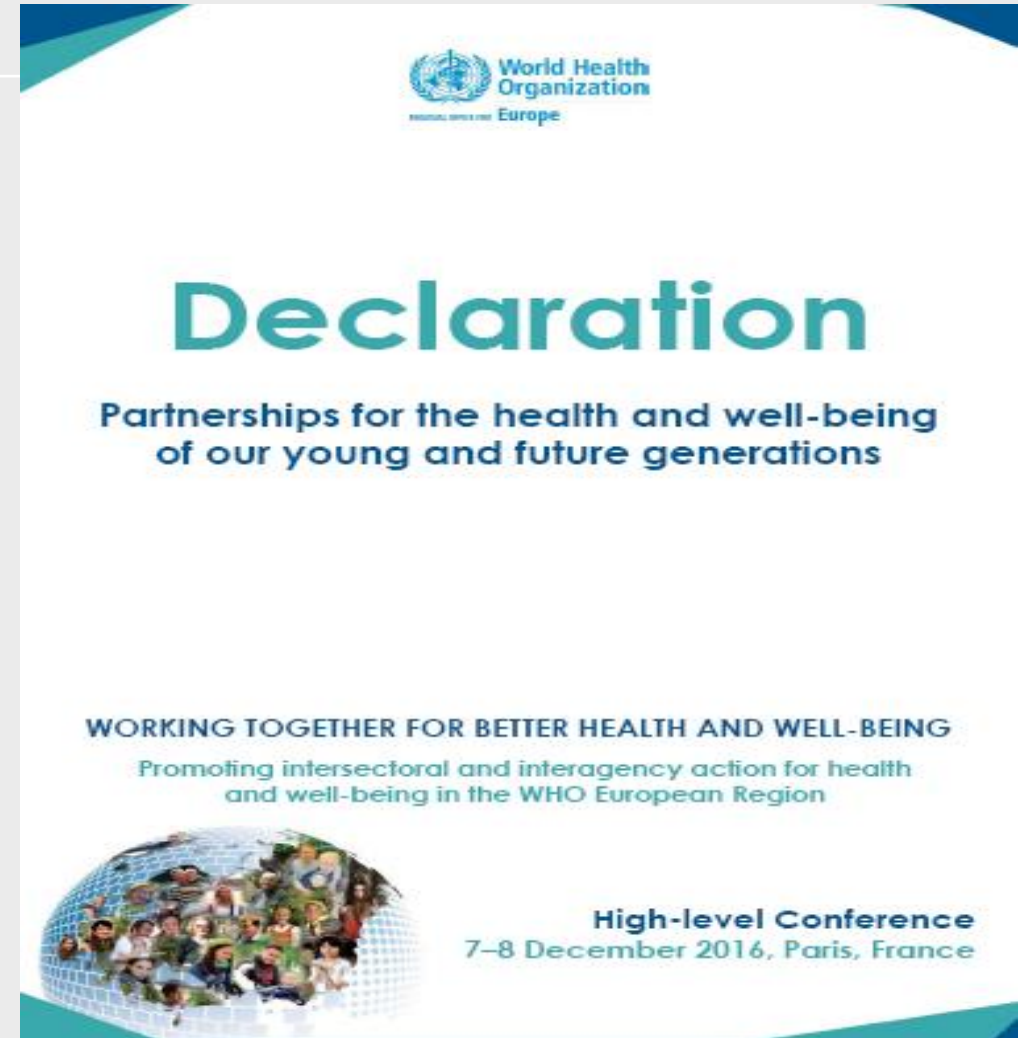
Strategy on health-promoting schools in place (comparison 2017 and 2020), by country



WHO online meeting on health promoting schools on 26 February 2026

A bit of history....

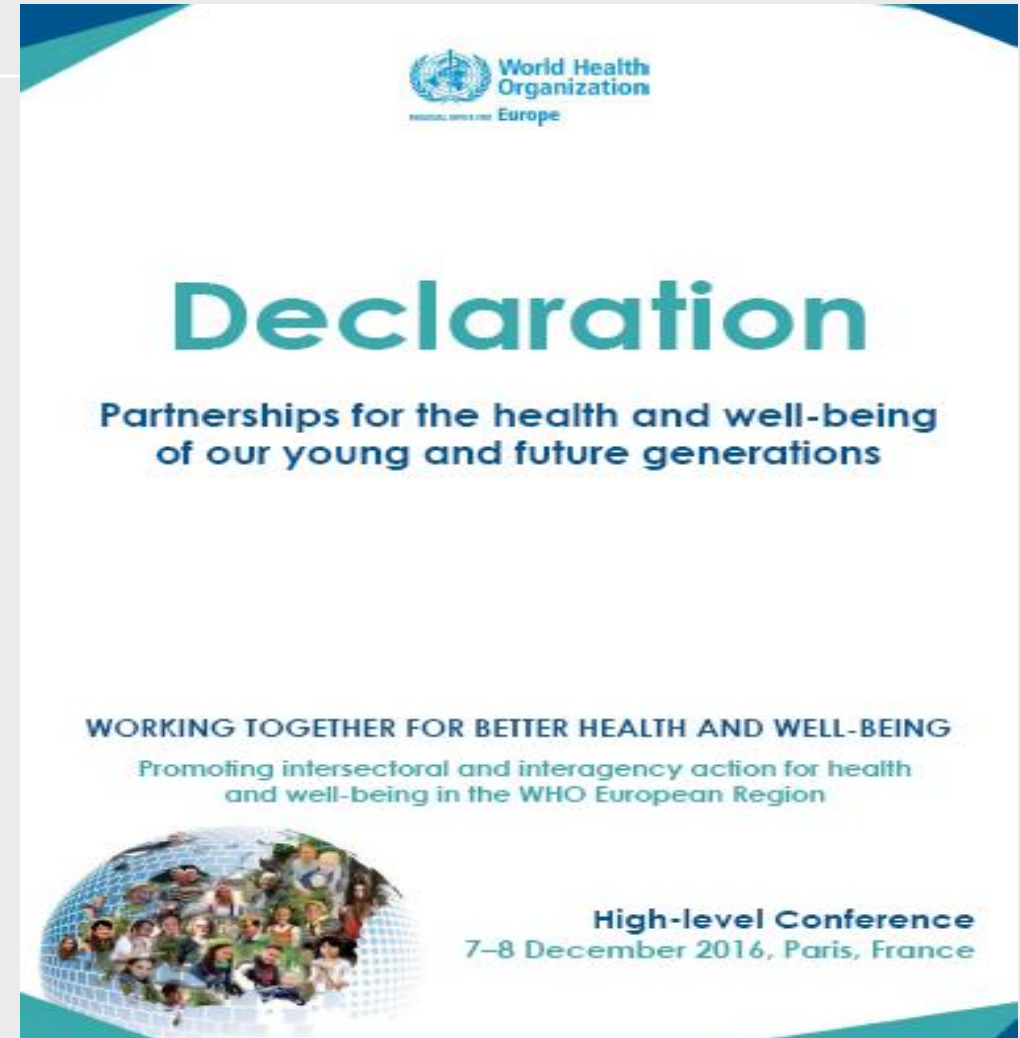
- Ottawa conference on Health Promotion 1986, Peebles Conference
- European Network of Health Promoting Schools established in 1992.
- The Global School Health Initiative was articulated by WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF in 1995
- European Network HPS transformed into Schools for Health in Europe in 2006
 - RD moved Networks out of WHO
 - Variable constructs and affiliations
- Secretariat in the Netherlands, later Denmark, Croatia



A bit of history....., ct.

- Five European Conferences on Health Promoting Schools:
 - 1997 Greece,
 - 2002 Netherlands,
 - 2009 Lithuania,
 - 2013 Denmark,
 - 2019 Russia
- European high-level conference on health and education Paris 2016 declares:

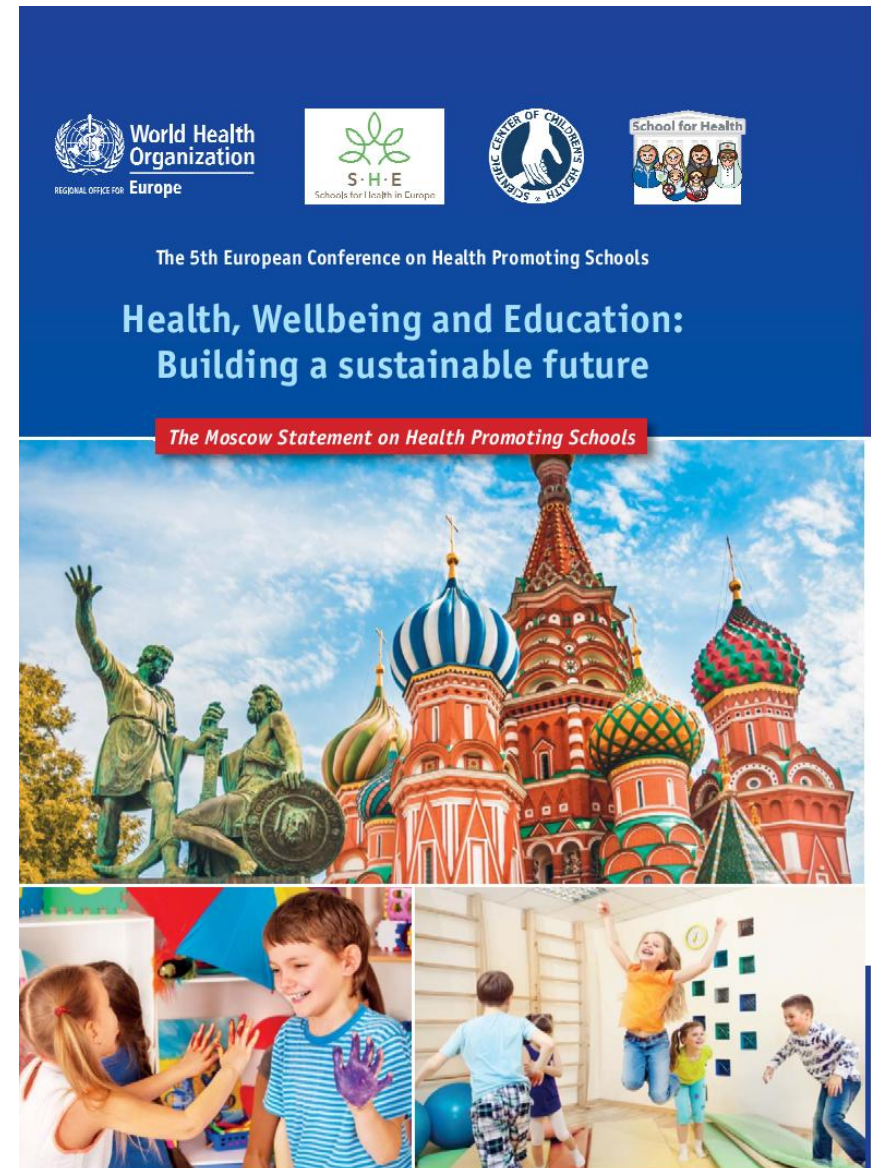
Every School should be a health promoting school



Activities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Expansion to countries where Russian is the main international communication language

- SHE orientations in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia
- Moscow Conference 2019 a major bilingual event
- WHO Collaborating Centre in Moscow translating SHE materials and hosting a Russian Language SHE website (SHE association suspended since 2022)
- Support by CC to 10 countries in EECA
 - Assessment of school health services



About the initiative *Making Every School a Health Promoting School*

Lead by WHO and UNESCO in close collaboration with FAO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and other partners

Vision

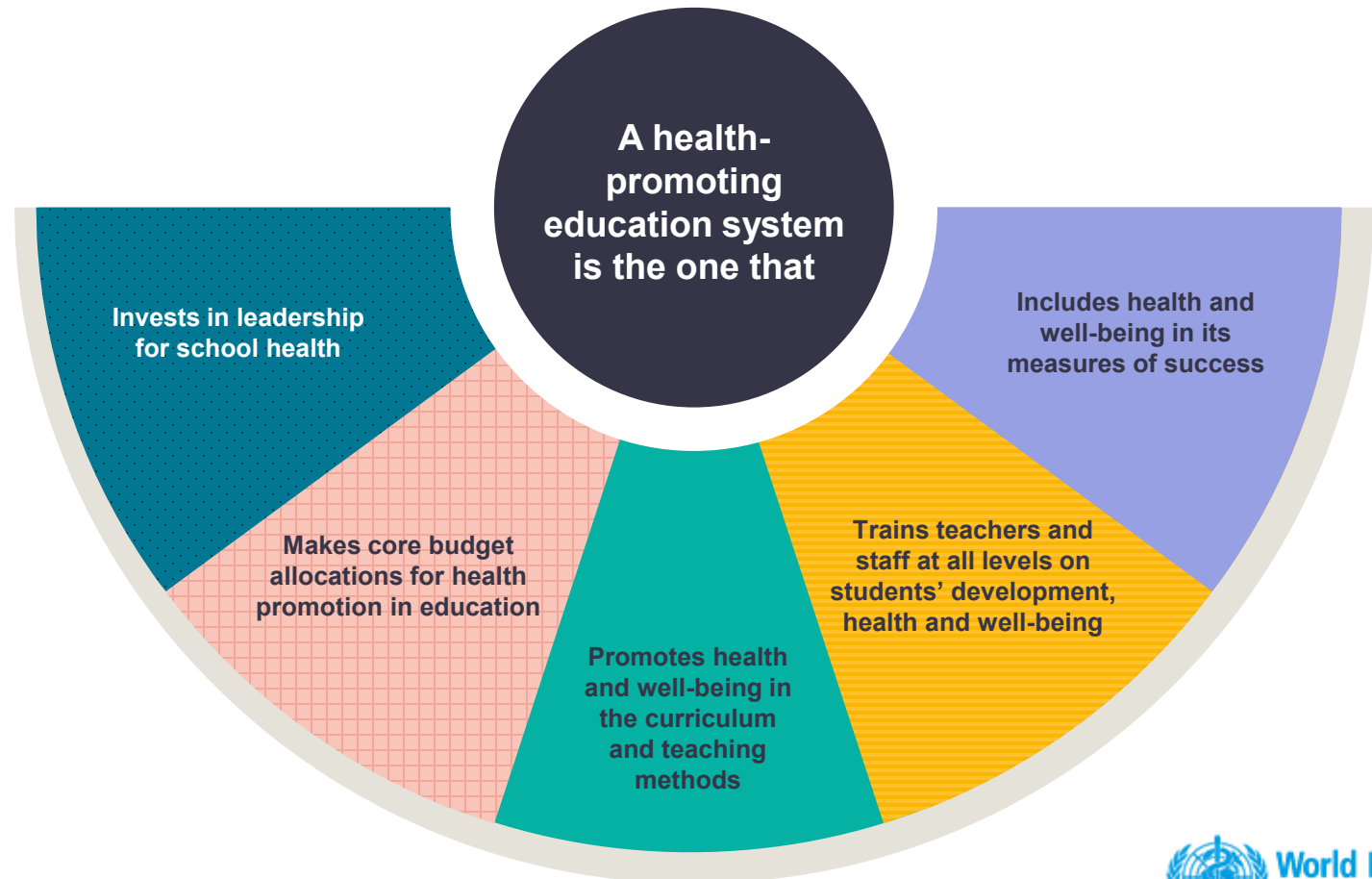


Make every school a health-promoting school

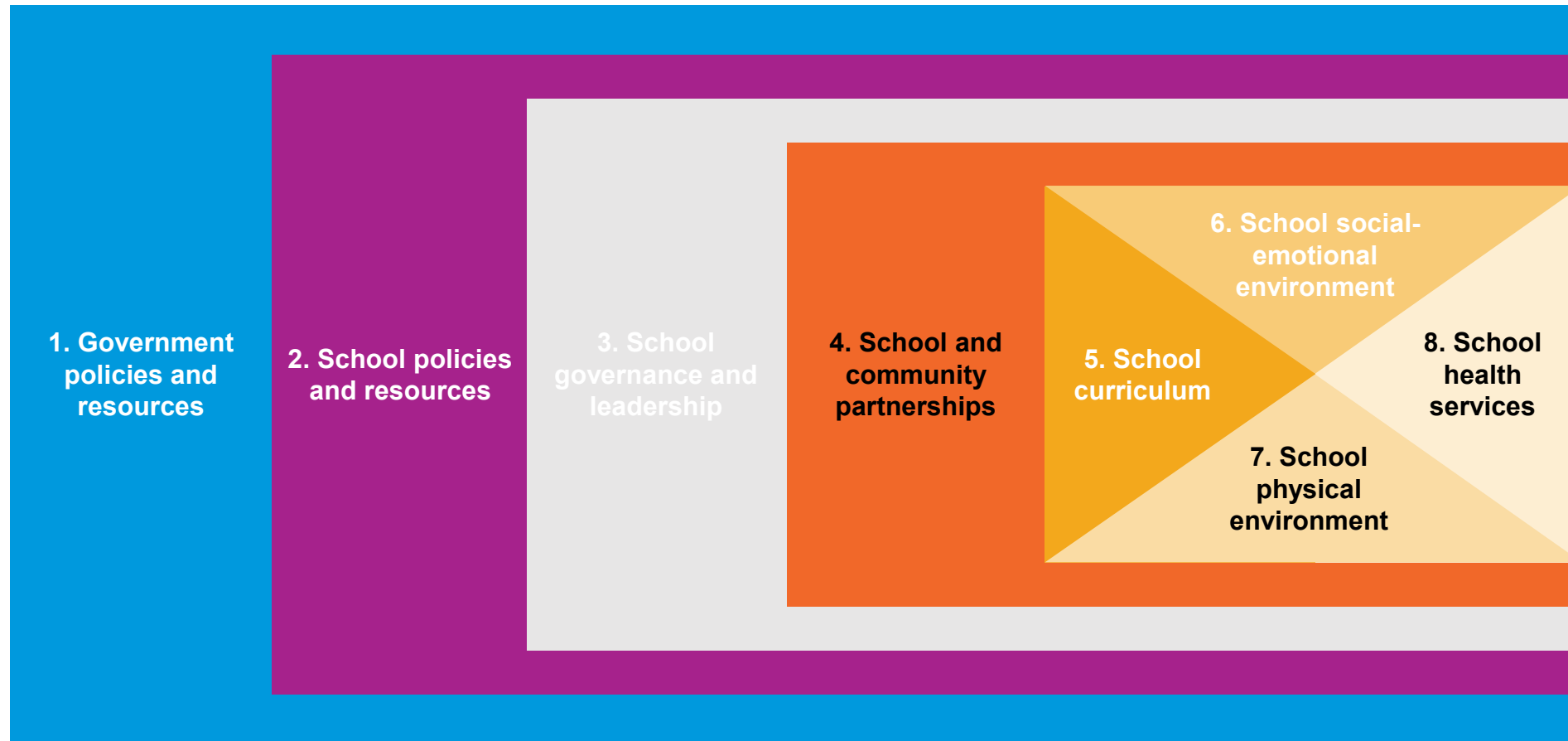
Aim



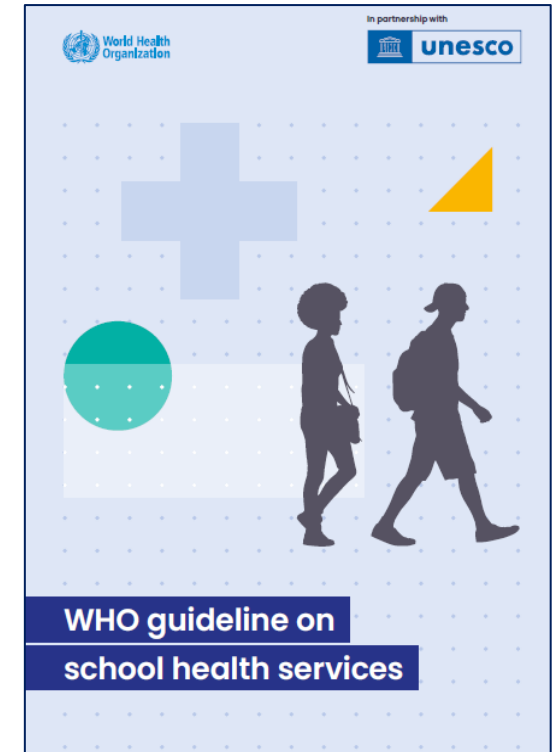
Support countries to build health-promoting education systems



The eight global standards for HPS are intended to function as a system



The guidance package consists of four documents



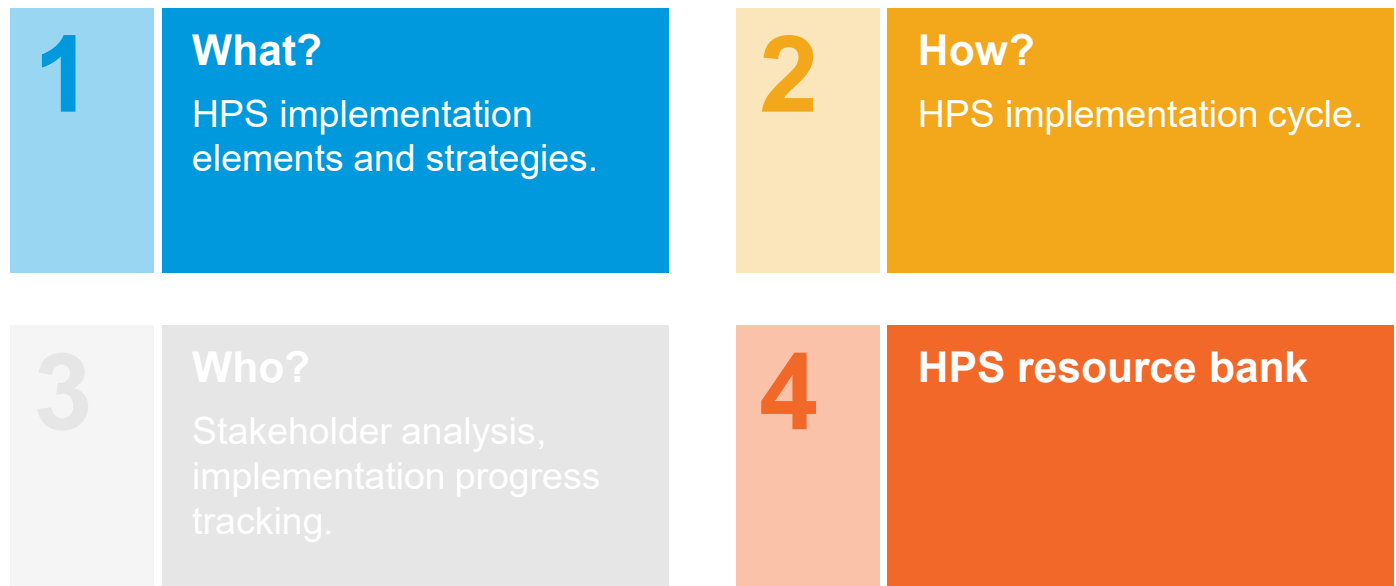
Implementation guidance



Aim of the implementation guidance for HPS

The purpose of the implementation guidance for HPS is to assist national, subnational (where relevant) and local governments in *developing, planning, funding and monitoring* sustained whole-school approaches to health promotion in schools.

The implementation guidance has four parts





Making every school a health-promoting school

13 levers to make every school a health-promoting school

Read the Implementation guidance



Implementation areas to make every school a health-promoting school



Thank you!