

# The WHO European Region Programme of Work 2020-2025: *United Action for Better Health in Europe*

Background information for EuroHealthNet Policy and Strategic Meeting, 24 February 2021

## What has happened?

The WHO Europe Regional committee has adopted the WHO European Programme of Work (EPW) for the next five years. It sets out how WHO Europe can help Member States' health authorities tackle challenges the region faces. It is part of WHO [core global priorities](#) – the **Triple Billion Targets** – which are both a measurement tool and a strategy to deliver:

1. One billion more people benefitting from **universal health coverage**,
2. One billion more people better protected from **health emergencies**,
3. One billion more people enjoying **better health and well-being**.



The EPW - underpinned by these core priorities to **Leave No One Behind** and to reinforce the **Leadership Capabilities of Health Authorities** – selected **four Flagship Initiatives**. These initiatives aim to be accelerators of change, mobilising around critical issues for the agendas of Member States, and for which high-visibility commitments in policy and practice can be transformative.

1. [The Mental Health Coalition](#)
2. [Empowerment through Digital Health](#)
3. [The European Immunization Agenda 2030](#)
4. [Healthier behaviours: incorporating behavioural and cultural insights](#)

The **Mental Health Coalition** (*which supports Core Priority 1*), focuses on transforming attitudes about mental health, expediting service reform and accelerating progress towards universal health coverage for people with mental health conditions. The Coalition will provide an overarching structure for exchanging experiences, facilitate national policy dialogues, stimulate fundamental and applied research and serve as an umbrella body for collecting lessons learnt and future perspectives on mental health policy formation and implementation.

The **Empowerment through Digital Health** initiative (*also supporting Core Priority 1*) will complement initiatives from countries and partner institutions by providing technical and policy guidance and expertise on the safety and efficacy of digital health solutions. It will aim to strengthen health equity, gender equality and human rights as core values in deployment of digital tools. This initiative complements and operationalises the **draft WHO Global Strategy on Digital Health**, filling gaps in the overarching digitalisation frameworks which hinder effective implementation of digital solutions. The initiative will finalise the **European Roadmap for Digitalization of Health Systems** and develop a **European Health Data Governance Charter** of values, principles, and methods for health data access, management, governance and use for health systems and public health action.



The **European Immunization Agenda 2030** (*supporting Core Priorities 2 and 3*) builds on the 2015-2020 **European Vaccine Action Plan**. The agenda sets a new course to address inequalities in vaccination coverage within and between countries by tackling constraints in the supply and delivery of vaccines, including those related to community demand and acceptance – and the need to confront vaccine hesitancy and the spread of misinformation. The agenda hinges on innovative programming and targeted local-level intervention, as well as securing high-visibility commitment from political leaders at all levels. A detailed roadmap with a monitoring framework will be prepared and WHO Europe will work with regional, subregional and national institutions and platforms to enhance local ownership and strengthen national policies and service delivery.

Through its **Healthier behaviours: incorporating behavioural and cultural insights** initiative (*supporting Core Priority 3*), WHO Europe is investing in insights to help build cultures of health and wellbeing, enabling healthier choices for all throughout life and for health systems. The initiative will engage disciplines beyond the bio-medical sphere and support countries to use insights into social, behavioural and cultural factors to improve health literacy, plus public policies which remove barriers between citizens, health and social care services. A [behavioural insights tool](#) has been launched, providing insights on pandemic responses, already implemented in over 30 countries. This initiative will also establish a resource centre for emerging research and a compendium of good practices, plus build investment cases for improving knowledge and evidence.

### *Relevance for Members and the EuroHealthNet Partnership: health promotion and disease prevention, addressing health equity and social determinants of health*

The EuroHealthNet office and Executive Board have begun negotiation with the WHO Europe Regional Office about a **Memorandum of Understanding** to support mutual activities.

However, prior to signing any agreement, the Executive Board has requested member guidance on priorities and commitments.

### Guiding questions:

- **What are Your Priorities:** What are the key elements of the WHO Europe Programme of Work for EuroHealthNet Member Agencies and for our Partnership?
- **How to improve Impacts:** How can EuroHealthNet most effectively liaise between your national and sub national needs and interests and the international priorities for UN Agencies including WHO Europe? How should we support Flagship Initiatives or other WHO programmes - through specific activities such as Thematic Working Groups, or via other communication channels?
- **How to add value for intersectoral improvements:** A stated WHO Europe aim is to strengthen health authorities via tailored support, including via impact assessments of economic recovery programmes, and to strengthen capacities to negotiate investments in health sector transitions. How do you foresee engagement with this aim?