

WHO European Healthy Cities Network
Annual Healthy Cities Business Meeting and Conference
Building Healthy Cities: Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable
Pécs, Hungary, 1- 3 March 2017

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Provisional scope and purpose

Within a complex world of multiple tiers of government, numerous sectors and both public and private stakeholders, cities are uniquely placed to provide leadership for health, given local governments' capacity to have a direct influence on the determinants of health and wellbeing, inequities and sustainable development.

The WHO European Healthy Cities Network was launched in 1988 as a political, cross-cutting and intersectoral initiative to be implemented through direct collaboration with cities. It is now a principal political and strategic vehicle for promoting whole of government and whole of society approaches within the WHO European Region.

Strengthening urban health to address the public health challenges of the 21st century requires a renewing of the political vision and leadership for Healthy Cities, and meaningful deliberation and integration of the concepts of promoting inclusiveness, improving health equity and creating conditions for sustainable and resilient communities. These endeavours are required not only in order to make citizens healthier and happier, but also more economically productive.

Health and well-being for all is a central focus of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Without health many of the Goals will not be reached: at the same time, health benefits from progress towards the other SDGs. Local governments have the authority and the capability to create conditions to promote healthy living and high quality of life for everyone who lives, works and visits their cities. Strategic decisions made in sectors such as housing, transport, energy, land use planning, urban agriculture and waste management all have significant impacts on the health of urban populations, as do policies related to education and human services.

Key actors and stakeholders in cities in urban planning, governance and finance must incorporate health as a central consideration in their decision-making processes. Depending on how they are made, and whose voices are heard in the decision-making process, such decisions can pose risks and impose costs – or they can yield substantial health benefits, unlock economic progress and foster environmental resilience.

This will be the final Annual Business Meeting and Conference to be held in Phase VI of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network. The WHO European Network consists of almost 100 cities. In addition, 20 accredited National Healthy Cities Networks in Europe have more than 1400 cities and municipalities as members.

The conference will be strategic and visionary in nature in preparation for the next phase of Healthy Cities and will include a strong political vision, presented by the newly formed Political Vision Group with political participation from the participating cities and networks.

The themes of the conference, inclusive, resilient and sustainable with equity and governance integrated across the three elements will be explored through a number of sub themes: Transport and environment; Migrant and refugees; healthy ageing; gender and early life

A special feature of this conference will be to dedicate significant time to the preparation for 2018, which celebrates 30 years of Healthy Cities and to the vision and criteria for the new phase, 2018 – 2022. There will be opportunities for dialogue between politicians and coordinators, learning & training for all delegates and surgeries that will offer the opportunity to consider city results from the mid-way review as well as other city challenges in improving health and reducing health inequities.

The Conference objectives are:

- to create the opportunity for dialogue to strengthen leadership and governance to accelerate action to improve health for all and reduce health inequities within the future of Healthy Cities and the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda at the local level;
- to debate and explore the political vision and criteria for the future of Healthy Cities, and further developing the building blocks of healthy cities, 2018 – 2022;
- to demonstrate and learn from the practices of Healthy Cities and national networks and the important contribution that healthy cities is making to improve health and well-being at the local and urban levels, especially in relation to inclusiveness; sustainable development and resilience; and
- to support the further development of the WHO Flagship Healthy Cities Training Course programme and implementation package for the new phase through interactive training and surgeries that will strengthen key Healthy Cities capacities and skills.

The expected participants will be:

- delegations from the city or municipality members the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, which will include the mayor or lead politician, the Coordinator and selected focal points identified to work on the Conference and Phase VI core themes;
- delegations from National Healthy Cities Networks, which will include the political chair of the network, the Coordinator, a representative of the health ministry and the regions and one or two observers from member cities;
- invited dignitaries, keynote speakers, resource experts and advisers; and
- representatives from European Region countries currently not involved in the Healthy Cities movement.