



SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
HEALTH NETWORK

**37th Plenary Meeting of the South-eastern Europe Health
Network and High Level Pre-Forum Event on “HEALTH, WELLBEING
AND PROSPERITY IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF
THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2030”**

28-29 June 2016, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

SUMMARY REPORT

OF
THE HIGH LEVEL PRE-FORUM EVENT AND THE 37th PLENARY OF
THE SEE HEALTH NETWORK
ON
“HEALTH, WELLBEING AND PROSPERITY IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS 2030”

28-29 JUNE 2016, SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SEE HEALTH NETWORK MEMBER STATES



PARTNERS



The South-eastern Europe Health Network expresses its acknowledgement and gratitude to the Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the current President of the SEEHN (January-June 2016) for their continuous political and technical leadership and support in the most efficient and high quality manner.



FAMILY PHOTO OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE JOINT SEEHN/WHO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE HIGH LEVEL MEETING AND 37TH PLENARY OF THE SEEHN, 28-29 JUNE 2016, SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



CONTENTS

SUMMARY REPORT.....	5
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 2. DISCUSSIONS	8
2.1. OPENING	8
2.2. PUBLIC SESSION ON 28 JUN 2016	8
2.2.1. South East European Strategy 2020 Implementation	8
2.2.2. Partnerships	11
2.2.3. Progress and challenges in the preparation of the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum in 2016	14
2.2.4. Draft outcome documents for the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum.....	16
2.3. PUBLIC SESSION ON 29 JUN 2016	18
2.3.1. Draft SEE MoU with SOPs.....	19
2.3.2. Draft Report on the Regional Collaboration in the SEE for Health and Well-being 2011-2016"	19
2.3.3. Draft Report on Investment for Health and Well-being in the SEE"	20
2.4. Presidency of the Republic of Moldova: Road Map and Calendar of the SEEHN in the second half of 2016.....	23
Chapter 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	25



SUMMARY REPORT

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The 37th Plenary Meeting of the South-eastern Europe (SEE) Health Network was organized under the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (health authorities in B&H shall include the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republic of Srpska and the Department of Health and Other Services of Brcko District in Bosnia and Herzegovina) in the first half of 2016. It was held on 28–29 June 2016 in Sarajevo and was the first High Level Pre-Forum Event with senior government representatives from the SEEHN countries and their partners, organized jointly by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the SEEHN Secretariat.

The years 2014 and 2015 were extremely intensive years for the regional collaboration for health, particularly with regard to the implementation of the Banja Luka Pledge (2011), the SEE 2020 Growth Strategy endorsed on 22 November 2013 by the SEE Ministers of Economy, and embedding health as separate dimension contributing to the economic development and growth; the EU 2020 Strategy and the WHO Europe Health 2020 Policy Framework (2012) as well as the European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health Capacities and Services (2012).

The year 2016 marks the 15th anniversary of the regional collaboration for health in South East Europe and the launch and successful development of the SEE Health Network, a historical organizational platform established by the governments of the SEEHN Member States since the endorsement of their Memorandum of Understanding in 2008 and its Addendum in 2011.

2016 will also be a new cornerstone for the SEEHN future as the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum will take place on 3-4 November 2016 in Chisinau, upon the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

Because of the above and in view of the current political, economic, social and health changes that have taken place in the region since the endorsement of the SEE Health Network Memorandum of Understanding in 2008, the 37th Plenary Meeting of the South-eastern Europe Health Network and High Level Pre-Forum Event's **specific objectives** of the meeting were to:

1. Review the progress of work of the SEE Health Network and its institutions in the first half of 2016 under the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency;
2. Review the implementation of the health objectives and measures of the SEE 2020 Strategy;
3. Review the preparation of the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum to be held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova in November 2016;

4. Conduct the first round of official consultations on the texts of the draft outcome and background documents for the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum in November, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, prior to the launch of the official inter-governmental consultations in July 2016;
5. Approve decisions on the outcomes of various SEEHN regional events conducted in the first half of 2016 if needed;
6. Approve the Road Map and Calendar of the SEEHN under the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova in the second half of 2016;
7. Approve and sign Memorandum of Understanding for Partnership with Istituto Superiore di Sanità – URE (ISS)

The **expected outcomes** of the meeting were as follows:

- To exchange views and develop common strategies and approaches towards a universal health coverage for prevention and control of non-communicable diseases;
- To strengthen the political commitment in SEEHN countries for intergovernmental and intersectoral collaboration in order to support effective and sustainable human resources for health, the mobility thereof and educational programmes;
- To create a mechanism -a platform - to be put in place for addressing health workforce development, mobility and education.
- To create a mechanism - a Task Force and a regional cross-border Platform- to be put in place to address crisis health preparedness aid in SEEHN region.

This gathering provided a platform for exchanging views, experiences and lessons learnt concerning the top common priorities of the SEEHN Member States related to the on going health system and public health service reforms, and for agreeing on joint regional and national actions for securing sustainability of the network.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss the Member States' political commitment to the SEE regional collaboration, exchange and discuss the needs for reforms in the light of the Framework H2020 and SDGs Strategy 2030, and further extend the collaboration and identify common targets for the progress of the SEEHN.

Additionally, during their closed sessions on 22 June 2016 of the Ad-hoc Meeting, the SEE Ministers of Health discussed and took important decisions on the following legal, political, technical and business priority issues:

- Approval for the recommended selected candidates for the permanent posts at the SEE Health Network Secretariat, Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- 4th SEE Health Ministers Forum, 2016: approval for the host country, date, theme and preparatory process;
- Strengthened governance of the SEE Health Network:
 - ✓ National Health Coordinators and their role in the countries;



- ✓ SEE Health Network Executive Committee: election of new members.
- Improved performance of the SEE Regional Health Development Centres (SEE RHDCs) in the various areas of technical collaboration.

CHAPTER 2. DISCUSSIONS

2.1. OPENING

In their opening statements, made by the SEEHN President Mr. Adil Osmanovic, Presidency of the SEE Health Network Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Doc. Dr. Vjekoslav Mandić, Presidency of the SEE Health Network Federal Minister of Health, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Dragan Bogdanić, Presidency of the SEE Health Network Minister of Health and Social Welfare of Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Andja Nikolić, Presidency of the SEE Health Network Department of Health and Other Services of Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the main focus was on the importance to strengthen the SEEHN status and on the expansion of the Network and the revitalization thereof at both political and technical levels. The significance of the SEEHN for the National Governments was stressed, as a conduit to an increased interest by Governments in developing a legal instrument for this body which is to be signed in Moldova.

The following highlights of the opening addresses should be underlined:

2.2. PUBLIC SESSION ON 28 JUN 2016

2.2.1. South East European Strategy 2020 Implementation

Mr. Gazmend Turdiu, Deputy Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council, explained about the implementation of the SEE 2020 (headlines and targets by 2020 were adopted at the ministerial meeting in 2012). RCC was asked to draft the Strategy. The strategy contains 5 pillars which include the aspects shown in figure1 below:

Fig. 1.



The SEE 2020 Vision which is outlined here is firmly anchored to the Europe 2020 strategy and similarly to EU 2020; the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth pillars deal with adding value, effective and sustainable use of resources and sharing of the benefits of growth, respectively. However, the objectives and targets of these pillars are being adjusted to region's needs. The smart, sustainable and inclusive growth dimensions were enriched with two other, region-specific dimensions: integrated growth (aiming at greater integration of regional markets) and governance for growth (providing a framework for building administrative and institutional capacities and fighting corruption).

a) *The SEE 2020 Programming Process is as follows:*

- Strengthen and promote universal health care
- Improve intersectoral governance in health sector
- Harmonise cross border health legislation
- Strengthen human resources for health through bilateral and multilateral agreements

Mr. Turdiu explained the reasons behind this process. National IPA coordinators were included because most of the programme funding came from the IPA funding processes 2016-2018.

b) *The Monitoring Process went on as follows:* M&E committee was established; the number of indicators was defined and decreased; coordination with the national and regional coordinators was improved; data on perception based indicators through the Balkan Barometer (project implemented by the JFK-German) was collected (Fig.2.).

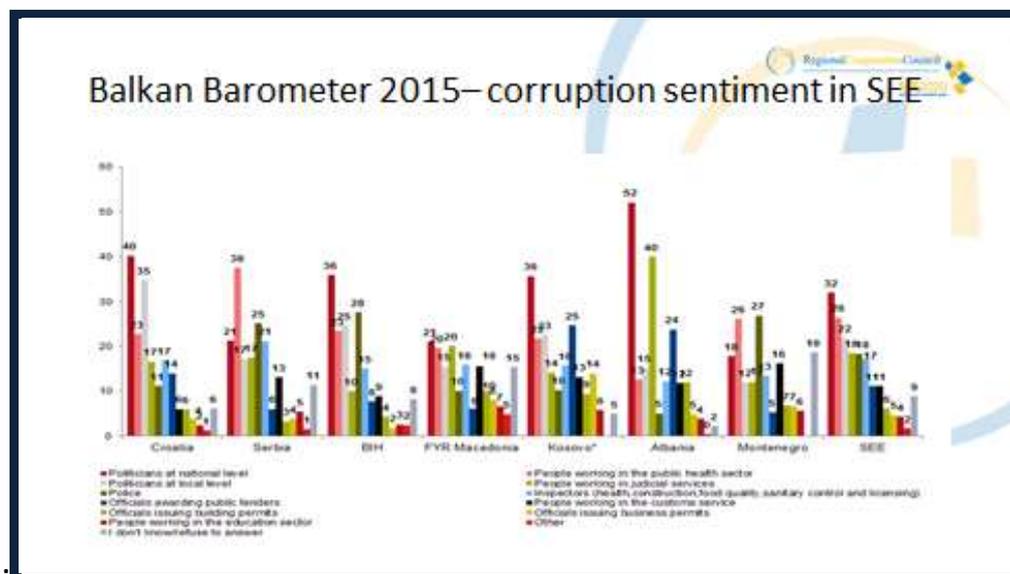


Fig.2.

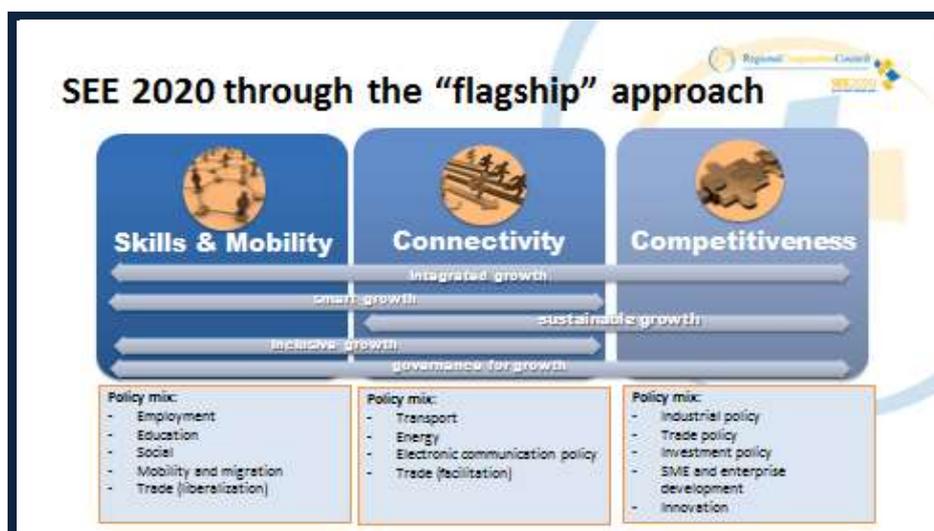
c) *The following conclusions were drawn from the presentation:*(the PPT is provided in the Annex 3)

- health insurance coverage expenditures are high (highest in RM, lowest in Slovenia)
- these conclusions were derived from official statistics

- social inclusion and poverty reduction have been recognized as a high priority for the countries
- long term sustainability remains jeopardized
- about the perception based indicators
- the level of corruption in the health sector

e)RCC-flagship

The programming of the SEE 2020 implementation through flagships was anchored to priorities and measures defined in the SEE 2020 Strategy, as well as to political commitments, socio-economic developments in the economies concerned (and the EU), maturity of regional cooperation in different policy areas and most importantly the funding realities. The planning process for the next years (3 years) period until 2018 has started. The RCC budget will be decreased (for 3 million), therefore we need to strongly prioritize our sessions and needs in line with Mr. Turdiu’s statement “Having to do more with less” (quote).



Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council stated that the RCC is interested in continuing the regional support, and confirmed that the RCC has laid the foundations without any long term planning. Within this budget, a specific amount of funds has been allocated for supporting the health sector.

Launching of the call for proposals began in March, and acceptance of applications finished in May, so the implementation process starts in July. This year 18 applications were received but only 9 will be contracted, to be signed before the end of July so that the implementation of the grants can start in September.

Dr Marija Kishman, representative of the Director General of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, made a reference to the WHO’s long history of providing information and data on a regular basis, and reassured the audience that the cooperation between the WHO and the RCC would be strengthened, especially in the field of health and economic data collection so that improvements can be made.

Mr. Gazmend Turdiu discussed about the past workshops held in January and February with representatives from RCC and all ministries, and specified several topics which they have reached agreement on:

- All the institutions that collect information should make it available to the experts;
- If the countries provide this kind of data to WHO, they should also pass it on to their respective ministries;
- Emphasize the need for better coordination.

Additionally, most of the participants made comments regarding this topic of discussion:

Dr. Goran Cerkez, NHC, FMoH/BIH, also expressed his concern over Health not being a priority, despite the economic, social, and other difficulties in this region, therefore requested international support in this regard.

Likewise, **Mr. Kosta Barjaba, National Health Coordinator, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Health, Albania** agreed that Government's perception of Health has been changed: health is seen as an ingredient of growth but not as an economic growth for the country - he stated. Also added that corruption, despite some latest changes and improvements, remains a problem in Albania according to the public perception about this phenomenon.

Dr. Mira Dasic, Deputy Chair of Executive Committee and National Health Coordinator, Montenegro underlined that the National Statistical Office and the Public Health Institutes (PHI) are also collecting this kind of data and that they can be directly approached in the future.

Furthermore, **Mr. Gazmend Turdiu** explained that the criteria for receiving grants had to be in line with the Health 2020 Strategy and that the projects needed to have a regional dimension, and highlighted that the same criteria would remain for the next year as well.

Dr. Marija Kishman, Representative of the Director General of the WHO Regional Office for Europe highlighted in her key note address that the WHO Europe Regional Director (RD) is currently working hard on placing Health on a higher position among governments' priorities (these discussions are ongoing in Albania, Montenegro, Romania...etc). She also said that this message would be brought back to the RD's focus, for further negotiations in the countries in the region.

2.2.2. Partnerships

2.2.2.1. Collaboration with the European Commission

The SEE Health Network has a long standing partnership, though without an officially signed document with the European Commission since 2005 when during the Second SEE Health Ministerial Forum in Skopje, the Forum was attended for the first time by its senior official. Since then the European commission has realized its support to the regional collaboration on public

health in the SEE region by various ways of support but when it comes for the SEE Health Network at the regional level, the collaboration has taken the following dimensions:

- i. The EC representatives in the SEE countries have participated in more or less most of the SEE Health Network events be them political or technical;
- ii. The SEE Health Network has always invited representatives of the European Commission to its events;
- iii. The political, technical and financial support of the European Commission through its TAIEX Instrument;
- iv. In reference to point iii., in the last four years (since 2013 until now) the SEE Health Network has received a vast technical and financial support in conducting close to 10 regional Multi-country Workshops on various areas of the EC Aquis Communautaire in implementing a mutually agreed work plan;
- v. Each one of these 10 workshops has lead to a political action of the SEEHN by signing a respective Decision on the subject and follow up actions by both the countries at national level and the leading SEE RHDC at the regional one; all signed Decisions are available at request and most of them are posted on the official SEEHN Website;
- vi. These EC TAIEX Multi-country Workshops have serious outcomes and are vital to the SEE Health Network as they have brought to:
 - a) Important technical benefits for the countries of the SEEHN;
 - b) bringing together and learning of over 800 public health professionals of the SEE region;
 - c) bringing together of EU and EC countries' experts and mutual learning;
 - d) substantial advancement of certain European policies and practices in the SEE region;
 - e) substantial financial contribution of close to one mln. Euros to the SEEHN in the years without external funding to technical regional actions



2.2.2.2. New Partnerships (The Istituto Superiore di Sanità, the Italian Institute of Health (ISS), Italy)

The first session was concluded with the announcement about the **New Partnership with the Istituto Superiore di Sanità, the Italian Institute of Health (ISS)**, and with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the **SEEHN and Istituto Superiore de Sanita – which was the first step in the signing process**. The chair invited the two speakers to give short statements on behalf of the SEEHN and the ISS regarding this new partnership:

Dr. Maria Ruseva, Acting Head of the SEEHN Secretariat congratulated this partnership in the area of Public Health and Emergencies. She underlined the SEEHN position: *“We are open to new partnerships. Emergency and Preparedness is also part of our Agenda”*, she stated.

The signing of the MoU which was recognized by the Presidency and the Regional Committee will be completed in Moldova. **Dr. Luca Rosi, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, the Italian Institute of Health (ISS)**, highlighted the importance and the idea of Partnership with a large group of Public Health Institutions, especially in an area where ISS has a big interest. He mentioned that this did not reduce bilateral agreements with countries in the region; on the contrary, the network is thereby gaining new capacities.

The Chair invited all SEE Countries to express their approval of the partnerships with the ISS and invited the SEEHN EX Com Chair and the ISS High Level Representative, Dr. Luca Rosi to co-sign the MoUs as a first step.



Signing the first step with the Istituto Superiore di Sanità, the Italian Institute of Health (ISS), Italy

2.2.3. Progress and challenges in the preparation of the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum in 2016

In the afternoon session, **progress and challenges in the preparation of the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum in 2016** was subject of discussion, chaired by **Dr Marija Kishman, WHO Regional Office for Europe**.

Mr. Andrei Cazaku, Authorized Senior Officer, Ministry of Health, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova gave the introduction and the overview of the preparations for the Ministerial Forum:

- a) Political commitment of ministers and composition of delegations;
- b) Readiness of the host country;
- c) Key-note speakers;
- d) Ceremonies and awards;

a) Political commitment of ministers and composition of delegations

The list of invited delegates includes: Prime Minister, Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Embassies of ALB, BiH, MNG, BLG, Serbia, MKD, Israel, EU Delegation, WHO CO, WHO EURO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, SDC, WB, GSF, Council of EU, EU Commission, etc. (The list of delegates and invited partners is presented in the Annex 4)

b) Readiness of the host country

The programme will be organized as a round table of Ministers of Health, WHO Professionals, and other UN representatives who will be contacted additionally. Ministers of Health will be chairing sessions, WHO senior representatives will be facilitating, and the respective Partners will have prominent roles as well. Members of the Executive Committee will be overseeing group discussions on various documents.

c) Key-note speakers

Dr. Maria Ruseva, Acting Head of the SEEHN Secretariat clarified the approval of the Scope and Purpose and stated that key note speakers have already been affianced: the Regional Director of WHO, EU Commission Representative, Minister of Moldova and the Secretary General of the RCC. The provisional programme has been drafted, but the programme is in process of development. Key UN advocates for the SDGs need to be invited as speakers as well; Dr. Ruseva also mentioned the probability for the good will ambassadors of WHO and UN (such as Princess of Sweden, Quinn Matilda of Belgium) to be invited.

d) Ceremonies and awards

After the programme hours, celebration of the 15 anniversary of the SEEHN is planned together with a ceremonial signing of the MoU with the Instituto Superiore de Sanita at the level of Presidents of the two organizations. Special awards, on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the SEEHN, will be handed to the most prominent SEEHN politicians, senior professionals and technical officers whose dedication and work throughout the years has contributed considerably and visibly to SEEHN maintenance, development and achievements. During the second day, the

Forum will discuss future plans, and possibly the Chisinau Pledge and the MoU of 2016 will be signed.

All participants indicated their understanding of the importance of commitment by all actors for the protocol of this event, the importance of the WHO role and its diplomacy experience in the organization of this high level meeting.

Dr. Maria Ruseva pointed out that the Network meets on a political level in order to take decisions and discuss future steps and further progress, within the context of the bonds between the SEEHN Strategy and the SDGs 2030. Additional technical meetings are planned for discussing challenges and modifications within the network.

Kosta Barjaba highlighted the political transformation of the SEE Health Network –by assuring governments’ commitment and becoming more user friendly -as a tool to intensify the cooperation, which is our mutual goal. *“In order to keep the Network technically more effective, we need to focus on regional cooperation and development of the Health centres”* - he said.

Dr. Marija Kishman mentioned once more that WHO EURO was using every occasion to emphasize the importance of the strengthening of the network and of the expansion of the commitments by Governments. WHO Europe RD is reconfirming the dedication of the WHO to this very important political event and is keeping the Ministers informed both through the Secretariat and directly through the WHO EURO Office. In addition, the WHO stays open for alternatives with regard to the invitations, but doesn’t have the binder for the possibility of the above mentioned celebrities. Among other things, Dr. Kishman reminded the audience of the possibility for having an awarding exercise during this meeting and opened the floor for ideas and initiatives of this kind.

Dr. Ruseva said that after the finalization of the programme, a list of politicians, partners and technical people will be proposed for awarding during this meeting and also mentioned the possibility for organizing an exhibition together with the PR department of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova, guided by a communication strategy proposed by the WHO Regional Office. Participants welcomed this idea of awarding as a recognition of the collaboration with the partners as well as awarding people presenting this Network and contributing to it for years (for example some of those who have continuously worked for 15 years in the network, such as Cerkez, Ruseva, Bino, Berlin, etc.). Dr. Ruseva took the obligation to present a preliminary list of both SEEHN senior officials and technical experts as well as of the partners for awarding during the 4th Forum.

Mr. Levental congratulated on the idea and underlined that this could be a message back to the Ministers about the continuum and importance of this Network.

During this session, common understanding was reached that the preparation of all the Background documents for the Forum remained a priority for all the members and the Secretariat. In addition, the Plenary will address the proposed decisions on political, technical and

business issues as per the agreed agenda and programme.

2.2.4. Draft outcome documents for the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum

The afternoon session continued in line of the **Draft outcome documents for the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum** facilitated by **Dr. Goran Cerkez, NHC, FMOH/BIH**:

- a) The Chisinau Pledge
- b) Framework for developing the SEE Health Strategy in line with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- c) Draft SEE MoU with SOPs
- d) "Draft Report on the Regional Collaboration in the SEE for Health and Well-being 2011-2016"
- e) "Draft Report on Investment for Health and Well-being in the SEE"
- f) Draft Report on Cross-border Public Health and Emergencies in the SEE in the SEE"

a) The Chisinau Pledge

Mr. Andrei Cazaku, Authorized Senior Officer, Ministry of Health, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova introduced the Draft Chisinau Pledge, followed by comments.

Participants agreed that the Chisinau Pledge is a very comprehensive and well organized document, approved by the Executive Committee, and agreed to provide written comments ASAP, except for **Mr. Alex Levental, Co-opted Member of the SEEHN Ex Com, Israel**, who raised his concern about the fact that subject of discussion was Health and SDGs 2030, while the Health 2020 Goals have not been reached yet. **Hristo Hinkov, Director of the National Centre of Public Health and Analysis, R. Bulgaria**, recognized the importance of the sustainability of the Network based on this kind of Pledges but also expressed his concern over the challenges that this region and the EU are facing at the moment and the influence thereof on the Network.

The chair Mr. Cerkez, NHC, FMOH/BIH pointed to the expectation of written comments for further consideration, despite the fact that all the documents mentioned in the Pledge have already received the different countries' commitment regarding implementation. **Dr. Mira Dasic** accentuated that this Pledge is a binding document of UNDAF, which means that the countries in the region have already accepted the Pledge through the UN system (MNG government has recently adopted the UNDAF until 2017-2021, which applies to other countries as well).

Professor Dragan Gjorgjev, Director, SEE RHDC on PHS, Republic of Macedonia commented that the Pledge was covering everything what the Minister should commit to, and that the only uncertainty remaining was how to translate it into action.

Representatives of Partners of the SEEHN, such as EuroHealthNet, IOM, the European Health Forum Gastein, the Croatian representative, also agreed that it was very comprehensive and covering a lot of actions and supportive of sustainable development, also in terms of the

challenges related to migrants.

It has been concluded consensually that the Pledge is a good basis for political commitment and a road map for moving forward and sustaining the network. Also the suggestion was accepted that all the countries should accentuate the importance of the network over the past 15 years and the importance of its continuation.

Dr. Kishman confirmed that WHO EURO was fully involved in the drafting of this document and went through consultation processes within relevant departments and aspects. She also clarified that all the WHO Member States adopted the SDGs and defined how they want to see the world in the future, and quoted Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director of WHO Europe's statement: *"this is historical and political responsibility to pursue the integration of health and wellbeing into each and every goal. We have the opportunity to put in practice the whole of the government and whole of a society which subscribes to health 2020" and this is how we are linking the SDGs and health 2020"*

b) Framework for developing the SEE Health Strategy in line with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Dr. Mira Dasic introduced the ***Framework for developing the SEE Health Strategy in line with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)***, as a chair of the working group for preparation of this working document drafted by *Dr. Richard Alderslade*. Driven by the agreement signed in September 2015 for 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Dr. Mira stated that across the SDGs, the challenge is to express operationally a broad interacted conception of health that fully reflects the distribution of health determinants and universal access. Synergistic policies are required, many of which reside outside health, supported by structures and mechanisms that foster and enable collaboration. These provide a convening point for action across sectors that will produce benefits for good governance in health and equity through the SEE region.

Dr. Maria Ruseva gave a clarification regarding the selection of the subject of the forthcoming and the Ex Com decision to develop a Framework which will apply to all the members of the network.

Participants mutually congratulated each other on the document and its importance, with some suggestions made by **Mr. Kosta Barjaba** regarding the strategic goals, as follows:

1. Invest in population health through life course approach
2. Improve health coverage/ Create affordable services for all
3. Strengthening health systems
4. Improvement of governance and cross-sectoral collaboration in countries
5. Sustainable health services to all people

In addition, several participants made some comments: (I.E. Alex Levental about the title; Dr. Hristo Hinkov from Bulgaria asked that migrant crisis be taken into consideration; Dragan

Gjorgjev asked that decision be taken on common topics for all countries and that action plan for implementation be developed, etc..., will be provided in writing)

Dr. Marija Kishman suggested a change in the title “from...UN Strategic Development...” to “...UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030...” and that more emphasis should be placed on intersectoral work with the environment and education sectors. She also described a very important development concerning emergencies and humanitarian action, which can be mentioned in this document as well: *The Executive Board in January 2016, the Director General, Deputy Director-General and Regional Directors of the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a statement committing to urgently reform the emergency work of WHO. The plan was for this work to be carried out in a comprehensive way “through the establishment of one single Programme, with one workforce, one budget, one set of rules and processes and one clear line of authority” and with “an independent mechanism of assessment and monitoring of the performance of the Organization, reporting to the governing bodies”. The WHO is building this new Health Emergencies Programme to help Member States build their capacity to manage health emergency risks and, when national capacities are overwhelmed, to lead and coordinate the international health response to contain outbreaks and provide effective relief and recovery to affected people. This involves working with countries and partners to prepare for prevention, response and recovery from all hazards that create health emergencies, including disasters, disease outbreaks and conflicts. Starting July 1st 2016, the Programme is scaling up efforts over the next 36 months to become fully operational at field level.*

The progress with the establishment of this Programme has been presented at the WHA 69 in 2016. There are also the so-called new funds and disbursements for emergencies: Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE). The SEEHN can include this in the document and request assistance from it as necessary.

2.3. PUBLIC SESSION ON 29 JUN 2016

The discussion about the draft outcome documents for the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum continued; the Chair **Dr. Goran Cerkez, NHC, FMOH/BIH** invited **Mr. Razvan Vulcanescu, National Health Coordinator, Secretary of State, Romania** to provide introduction on the subject. He declared that the recognition of health as a contributor to growth, economic development and employment under the Regional Cooperation Process will bring new opportunities for the SEEHN Member States to further improve the health in the region. He also referred to the success of the network in terms of its sustainability and its role of an advocate for health in the region, including health as a specific dimension, by strengthening partnerships and sharing good practices between EU and non EU countries; the possibilities for expansion of the network (Hungary, Turkey and Ukraine) in order to maintain and improve the quality and goals in the region. He also emphasized the great potential the Network has and the need to be stimulated and promoted. Political and scientific support by the WHO EURO is a guarantee that the network will further grow and operate.

2.3.1. Draft SEE MoU with SOPs

The discussion about the draft background documents for the SEE Ministerial Forum continued, **Mr. Vulcanescu**, after stating how the *MoU has a special value for the regional collaboration as renewal of the commitment by all states to collaboration in the future and that it should act as a milestone for work*, invited the **SEEHN Legal Adviser, Prof. Franck Latty** to give a short presentation on the main issues for discussion.

Prof. Franck Latty mentioned that the document holds some margins and needs some technical changes; nevertheless, he proposed to combine everything in one comprehensive document that could become an international treaty thus acting as a legal document.

This provoked a discussion about the presidency interval - if it should remain 6 months or maybe should be extended to one year. Recognizing the key common challenges and opportunities that have emerged from these discussions, **Dr. Maria Ruseva** specified that this is a crucial component for the future of the network and it is up to us to guarantee the process of finalization of the SoP and MoU. Representatives committed to supporting this process in their respective countries and securing its finalization before the Forum in Moldova.

The chair **Dr. Cerkez** summarized the conclusions and deadlines:

- ✓ All agreed to have one comprehensive draft document
- ✓ The first draft is expected by August 1st
- ✓ By September 20th comments and modifications to be introduced into the document
- ✓ Ministers' approval to be given during the Forum in Moldova to be followed by the ratification process, with final document signed in the beginning of 2017
- ✓ Define very clear procedures within the SOPs
- ✓ *The current President of the SEEHN shall remain the Chair of the "Troika" Presidency. The composition of the "Troika" Presidency shall change every year according to the alphabetical order of countries. The "Troika" Presidency shall provide political support to the current Presidency in all cases of utmost importance for the SEE Health Network of any nature, e.g. political, strategic, technical and managerial, under any circumstances. All decisions of the "Troika" Presidency in support to the current President shall be made with consensus.*

2.3.2. Draft Report on the Regional Collaboration in the SEE for Health and Well-being 2011-2016"

The following session was chaired by **Dr. Amela Lolic, National Health Coordinator, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina**; after a brief introduction on the documents subject of discussion she invited **Mr. Kosta Bajraba, National Health Coordinator, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Health, Albania**, to introduce the "Draft Report on the Regional Collaboration in the SEE for Health and Well-being 2011-2016":

It is a paper which shows the short history of the Network and explains the difficulties and challenges faced. The focus of this document is on 7 issues:

- a) Context of the Network and responding to challenges in the Region.
 - b) The context of the Network as part of the Stability Pact in the Region.
 - c) The Role of Member Countries and the Role of Partners, clarifying the process of collaboration within the network.
 - d) The vision of the Network and its evolution (started as a vision for a network created by countries in post-conflict situation, afterwards the Dubrovnik pledge placed the emphasis on health and peace and stability in the region, then Skopje pledge explained the importance of health in economic growth; the vision shifted towards regional cooperation, then towards the whole of government and whole of society in 2009 and particularly towards non-communicable diseases, shaped by the strategic development of "health 2020" in these countries)
4. Main achievements of the network /the technical level
 - Establishment of the RHDC and the transformation of the Regional offices into RHDC, some integrated within the Government Institution.
 - Mandate of Sustainable Regional Public Health Initiative.
 - The role of the network in capacity building
 6. The status of the Network; the need for more investments in health in the member countries; the emerging health adds particularly in NCDs; and implementation of health in all policies which are empowering member countries to strengthen the intersectorial cooperation and empowering governments in strengthening health for all policies.
 7. How to meet and overcome challenges in the regional cooperation:
 - The need for greater political commitment and strengthening of the Secretariat function
 - Visibility of the network
 - Involvement of the information system for integration

Dr. Ruseva shared some additional information about this document serving as a background paper intended to support the decisions of the Ministers in Moldova in order to strengthen the regional cooperation; namely, this document was used as a topic for the PhD thesis of an external evaluator, Mr. Allen Nielen from the Graduate Institute of Geneva, Switzerland.

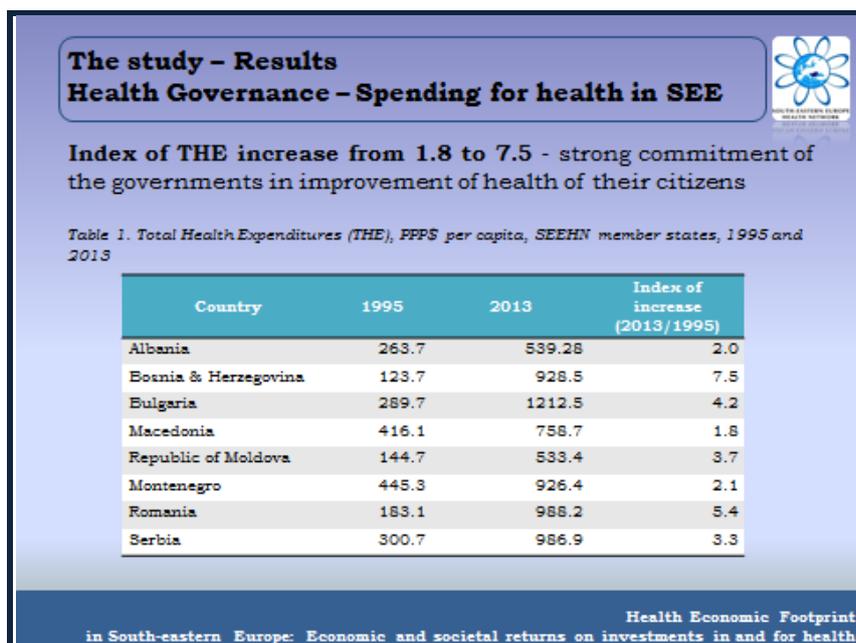
2.3.3. Draft Report on Investment for Health and Well-being in the SEE"

The third document was presented by **Professor Dragan Gjorgjev** "*Draft Report on Investment for Health and Well-being in the SEE*", *Health Economic Growth* and, which has been initiated by Christine Brown WHO EURO

Dr. Gjorgev presented the objectives of the study, which wants to make an attempt to identify the contribution made by the health sector to the national economy primarily through the analysis of the effectiveness of some public health policy interventions in the SEE countries. Another purpose of this analysis is to give economic arguments for making investments in different non-health sector budget holders at national and/or local level in the countries - that capitalize in health outcomes.

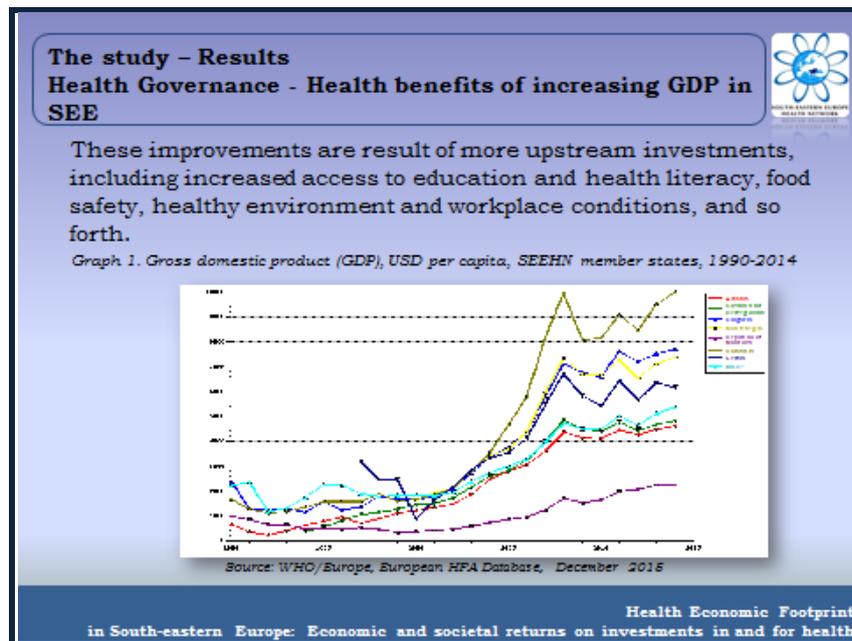
He presented how Health is not only a precondition for economic growth, but driving force for providing growth opportunities. Dr. Gjorgev underlined the concern over the rising health care costs and over the sustainability of public services, by evaluating the commitment by the Governments to improvements in the area of health. Fig4

Fig. 4.



Improving population health and good governance of health sector performance will make an important contribution to labour market productivity. The study results on Health Governance are showing health benefits of the GDP increase in SEE (Fig 5.)

Fig. 5.



By presenting case studies from different countries in the SEE region, Dr.Gjorgjev concluded that investments in health could be made in different ways and still produce a significant and scalable economic return. He also recommended that this was an attempt to encourage governments and decision-makers - through the pre-set conceptual framework and concrete economic data - to undertake brave steps into investments that have long-term gains for health as well as for the economy. (Presentation by Professor Dr. GJORGEV as Annex5)

Facilitators and the representatives congratulated **Dr. Gjorgjev** and **Ms. Neda Milevska, Studiorum**, for the development of this document as a great contribution to the network and recognized it as a study that one would want to share with the Ministers, as an explanation why health is so important for economic growth.

Mr. Kosta Barjaba summarized the importance of the Draft Report on the Regional Collaboration in the SEE for Health and Well-being 2011-2016" with the following statement (quote): *"this document is an innovative explanation of the regional cooperation and one that is building trust between countries, bringing them together to merge resources, transparency and partnership. The network has proved to have potentials to be a sustainable initiative of the region and in this term we are strengthening the dimension and power not just as a stability pact but as its own inevitability to continue building our capacities". I picked up two lessons from the network:"*

- ✓ Proved that collective engagement is more efficient than individual action;
- ✓ The network proved that despite the small size of the countries and being a small region composed of small countries, the history proved that it was an opportunity for all countries.

Whereas "Draft Report on Investment for Health and Well-being in the SEE" *has addressed the health system by putting the health in the local and economic context of each country*

individually, and at the same time in a global and EU development context; the paper discovered the direct links between growth and health as an indicator of wellbeing; health is very influential if we consider GROWTH as SMART, green (environmentally protective), sustainable in social and human dimension and inclusive (all people have to contribute and benefit from growth)! This paper is talking about increasing health expenditures, so governments should contribute more to health, and should transform policy priorities. Health should be involved in all policies: this is a smart way to compensate for the limited financial resources allocated to health in comparison to other systems, such as education, food, culture, etc..”.

2.4. Presidency of the Republic of Moldova: Road Map and Calendar of the SEEHN in the second half of 2016

Mr. Andrei Cazacu, Authorized Senior Officer, Ministry of Health , Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, requested the approval of the final examination and approval of the Road Map and Calendar of the SEEHN under the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova in the second half of 2016. Strengthening the Governance structures of the SEE Health Network, such as setting up of the SEEHN Secretariat and finalizing the Selection process of 2015 and launching a new selection process for the Head of the Secretariat and a new Technical Officer, has been underlined.

The discussion has enclosed the estimations for the collection of pending yearly contributions from the SEEHN Member States and developing and endorsing the SEEHN Yearly Financial report for 2016 and the yearly Financial plan for 2017, as well.

Regarding the SEE Network partnerships, **Dr. Maria Ruseva** invited Ms. Sanja Sazdovska, Acting Technical Consultant from the SEEHN Secretariat, to follow partnership indicators for evaluation (identify joint regional priorities for the next year-2017; identify possibilities for cooperation with IOM, Studiorum, ECDC, etc). She also highlighted that most of our MoUs will undergo a new round of discussions and negotiations for partnerships with new activities to be included, which one will report about at the 38th Plenary meeting.

Also one of the important decisions of the SEEHN Ex Com on outstanding managerial and legal matters of the Network, has been the importance of the permanent liaison between the SEEHN Ex Com and WHO Europe, the RCC regarding and EC TAIEX:

- Visits to planned Regional Initiatives
- Participation in the SEE 2020 Strategy Coordination Meetings

In this regard, an invitation has been requested to the SEE HNCS /SEE RHDCs for developing as soon as possible the new applications for multicounty regional workshops, following which the SEEHN Executive Committee should submit them to EC TAIEC Instrument for the period XX 2016 – 31 December 2017.

Dr. Alexandre Berlin, Honorary Director, European Commission, and Co-opted Member of the SEEHN Executive Committee also suggested study visits and expert missions to be included into the plan on multilateral basis.



One of the last subjects of discussion in the last session was also strengthening the capacities and performance of the SEEHN RHDCs and their support to scale up their work and capacities; Strengthening the SEEHN RHDC on CDS/SECIDS /Tirana/Albania and the SEEHN RHDC on HRH/Chisinau/MDA towards attaining WHO Europe CC status (See [Annex 6 –Roadmap](#))

Dr. Maria Ruseva congratulated the SEEHN RHDC on CDS “SECIDS” for their ability in the fund raising arena (approx. 300,000\$ from CDC, Atlanta). In this respect, a suggestion was made by Ms. Ledia Agoli, Chief Executive Manager of SECIDS and representative from Albania, to create possibility for legal registration of the RHDCs as legal entities in the respective country. In this context she requested that by July each of the Centres should have come up with major technical activities to be included in the road map; this is how we can revise and finalize the Road Map and approve it in Moldova.

Chapter 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The High Level Meeting and the 37th Plenary Meeting of the South-eastern Europe Health, convened under the Presidency of the Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Health, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republic of Srpska and Department of Health and Other Services of Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina), completed its objectives successfully;
2. With regards to the review of the progress of work of the SEE Health Network and its institutions in the first half of 2016 under the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, the high level representatives of the Ministries of Health and the National Health Coordinators expressed their sincere appreciation and gratitude to the BiH Presidency for the political leadership and professionalism of performing its duties in the period January – July 2016; in this regard, the Report of the Bosnian Presidency for the second half of 2016 was approved by the 37th Plenary of the SEEHN pending some corrections and comments to be completed;
3. The BiH Presidency acknowledged highly the significant political, technical and administrative assistance of WHO Regional Office for Europe in supporting the SEEHN and with regard to the organization of the all high level and technical regional meetings of the SEEHN.
4. The High Level Meeting of the SEEHN Representatives acknowledged, with appreciation, the role and continuous support of the Regional Cooperation Council in the development of the SEE 2020 Strategy and its implementation.
5. Regarding the Review of the implementation of health objectives and measures of the SEE 2020 Strategy, the following has been concluded:
 - The 37th Plenary appreciated the presentation of the Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) regarding the implementation of the SEE 2020, highlights and overview of the SEE 2020 Strategy's 5 pillars, and also invited further support and prospects for fundraising through the RCC.
 - The planning process for the next years (3 years) has started, the RCC budget will be decreased and therefore prioritization of the health sessions has been strongly required.
 - It has been confirmed that the criteria for receiving grants have to be in line with the Health 2020 Strategy and the projects need to have a regional dimension.

- Participants expressed their concern over the need to maintain health high on the government's agenda, despite the economic, social, and other difficulties in this region, and requested international support in this regard.
- Representative of the RD Desk, WHO EURO asserted the long history of WHO in data provision (particularly data needed for improvement of health and economic data), and also reassured the audience that the cooperation between the WHO and the RCC would be strengthened, while pointing out the RD's serious intervention to position health higher among the government's priorities;
- Regarding the approval and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for Partnerships with Istituto Superiore di Sanità – URE (ISS), the following conclusions have been drawn:
 - The MoU was recognized by the Presidency and the Regional Committee, and the importance of growing partnerships was recognized by the 37th Plenary.
 - The signing process will take place in two steps; the first step was the signing exercise during the 37th Plenary and the next step will be completed at the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum to be held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova in November 2016.
 - Regarding the preparation of the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum to be held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova in November 2016, the following has been arranged:
 - Political commitment of ministers and composition of delegations has been clearly defined: Ministers of Health will be chairing sessions, WHO Senior Representatives will be facilitating, and respective Partners will have prominent roles as well. Members of the Executive Committee will be overseeing group discussions on various working documents.
 - Country preparations: The list of delegates and key note speakers have been defined, nominations are expected.
 - Ceremonies and awards: Celebration of the 15 anniversary of the SEEHN and celebration of the signing process of the MoU with the Istituto Superiore de Sanita will be organized. In addition there will be an awarding ceremony, as a recognition of the collaboration with the partners and possibility to acknowledge the people who have presented the Network and have contributed to it for many years.
 - In view of the forthcoming Forum, WHO EURO representative emphasized the importance of the need to strengthen the network and to ensure commitment by the governments, and highlighted the RD's interest and dedication to the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, in November 2016 ;
 - Approval of the Road Map and Calendar of the SEEHN under the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova in the second half of 2016; the following was defined:
 - The Pledge has been drafted under complete supervision of all relevant departments of the WHO EURO, shaped as a good basis for political commitment and a guide for moving forward and sustaining the network. All the countries accentuate the importance of the network in the past 15 years and the importance of the continuation of the network.
- MoU has a special value for the regional collaboration, as a renewal of the commitment by all states to joint collaboration.

- A mutual agreement for creating one comprehensive document, supported by the International Legal Advisor, has been made. The first draft is expected by August 1st, and conclusions and comments need to be introduced by September, to be followed by Ministers' approval during the forum in Moldova. Ratification of the final document is scheduled for the beginning of 2017.
 - The current President of the SEEHN shall remain the Chair of the "Troika" Presidency. The composition of the "Troika" Presidency shall change every year according to the alphabetical order of countries. The "Troika" Presidency shall provide political support to the current Presidency in all cases of utmost importance for the SEE Health Network of any nature, e.g. political, strategic, technical and managerial, under any circumstances. All decisions of the "Troika" Presidency in support to the current President shall be taken with consensus.
6. In line with the first round of official consultations on the texts of the draft outcome and background documents for the Fourth SEE Ministerial Forum in November, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova prior to launching the official inter-governmental consultations in July 2016, two documents have been presented and their importance has been acknowledged by all participants.
- The "Draft Report on the Regional Collaboration in the SEE for Health and Well-being 2011-2016" has been presented and welcomed by all participants and partners.
 - The "Draft Report on Investment for Health and Well-being in the SEE", Health Economic Growth, has been presented and the importance thereof has been recognized.
 - The third document has not been completed yet.
7. Approval of the final examination of the Road Map and Calendar of the SEEHN under the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova in the second half of 2016 has been requested. Strengthening the Governance structures of the SEE Health Network in view of the forthcoming events has been highlighted and an invitation for development of new applications and submission thereof by the SEEHN Executive Committee to EC TAIEC Instrument for the period XX 2016 – 31 December 2017 has been demanded.
8. The SEEHN Secretariat is to follow partnerships indicators for evaluation, with a view to identifying joint regional priorities and joint cooperation for the next years 2017. Regional Centers are to prepare major technical activities to be included in the road map by the end of July.
9. Strengthening the capacities and performance of the SEEHN RHDCs and their support to scale up their work and dimensions; In particular, strengthening the SEEHN RHDC on CDS/SECIDS /Tirana/Albania and the SEEHN RHDC on HRH/Chisinau/MDA towards attaining WHO Europe CC status has been discussed.