



SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
HEALTH NETWORK



REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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OUTLINE REPORT ON THE TECHNICAL MEETING
OF THE SEEHN REGIONAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRES
“STRENGTHENING SEEHN TECHNICAL COLLABORATION”

**Moderator: Dr. Mihai Horga, Director of RHDC on Sexual and Reproductive Health,
Romania**

Venue: Institute of Public Health, Str.Dzona Dzeksona bb, Podgorica, Montenegro

The overall goal of the technical meeting of the RHDCs was to contribute to further strengthening of the technical collaboration among SEEHN Member States, strategically to plan the activities at the Regional level related to the Chisinau Pledge Action Plan framework. Furthermore, the meeting purpose of the meeting was to foster mechanisms for technical cooperation, financial resources, monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms and instruments as well as, to strengthen the role and value of the SEEHN as a technical high professional generator in the specific health areas of the RHDCs.

This technical meeting was **held in Podgorica in the period 30-31 October 2018** and was organised by the SEEHN Secretariat in partnership with the Institute of Public Health in Montenegro. The aim was also to provide RHDC Directors and National Health Coordinators (NHC) with an overview of the technical collaboration and its strategic benefits for the countries while illustrating the vital importance of high-level political commitment and focusing the SEEHN technical activities on the implementation of the Chisinau Pledge commitments.

The meeting was attended by representatives of all SEEHN RHDCs and some Member States Ministries of Health (*List of participants enclosed*).



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Presentations of the RHDCs

The workshop kicked off with the welcoming speeches and short introductions of the representatives of 5 RHDCs and the country representatives (SECIDS – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the NHC representative of Bulgaria, Noncommunicable Diseases – Montenegro, PH – Macedonia, Human Resources in Health – Moldova, Accreditation and Continuous Quality Improvement - Serbia). The RHDCs representatives presented the technical activities implemented during 2018, their key achievements, activities with partners and the main challenges ahead.

Current work and challenges

Influenza Programme Management Practices was the SECID's main programme in 2018 that mainly focused on activities such as capacity building, exchange of experience, best practices and awareness raising. The influenza vaccine was covered by the Programme as a separate topic on which extensive activities were carried out during 2018. The digitalisation of data collection was a new dimension SECID implemented to improve the quality and spectrum of data provided related to the vaccinations. The key achievements listed included activities related to Influenza

The Bulgarian representative expressed their will to keep the current RHDC on Antimicrobial Resistance. The latest international development cooperation with Vietnam and China was mentioned too. Some of the main reforms in the country were listed. One which is of particular importance for the SEE Region as a unique practice is that the prohibition of electronic cigarettes falls under the same legislation as tobacco control. Some of the future plans for 2019 shall be considered in the SEEHN calendar, such as: 16+1 Conference of Ministers to be held in Bulgaria in May 2019, OCEMN Health Ministers meeting to be organised in May-June 2019. Health reform achievements, such as TB prevalence reduced, decreasing HIV epidemical trend, and increasing vaccinations rates, are also worth mentioning.

The RHDC on NCDs in Montenegro concentrated their work on defining the minimal set of indicators for monitoring NCDs and related HIS. The workshop in this regard has been organized back to back to the SEEHN Meeting on 20.10.2018. The representatives of nine SEEHN countries acknowledged the work, will take the document for country consultations and follow-up approval.

The RHDC on Public Health in the Republic of Macedonia (MKD) highlighted the work on universal health coverage within the *World Health Day* celebrated on the 7 April by promoting the Universal Health Coverage: Everyone, Everywhere! Among other activities, the partnership between the RHDC in MKD with RHDC in Romania was strengthened through a common project proposal application to carry out a study on the socio-economic factors and their influence on



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reproduction of the population. An additional regional activity worth mentioning is the preparation of the TAIEX Multi-Country Workshop on Strengthening Injury Information Systems for Road Safety in South-Eastern Europe Countries, held on 15-16 November, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

The Republic of Moldova (MDA) RHDC Director provided an overview of the latest country reforms at the end of 2017 after the reorganisation of the RHDC where Human Resources migrated under the National Agency of Public Health. The human resources shrank by half. However, the RHDC launched the development process of a Human Resources Strategy 2025. This experience might be replicated at regional level. A TAIEX application on Human Resources was sent to the European Commission.

The East European Institute for Reproductive Health from Romania works in 17 countries in the SEE Region and Central Asia. Multisectoral, coordinated response to gender-based violence was provided to MDA, BiH, MKD. Evidence-based and rights-based family planning training was introduced in ALB and MDA. The aim is to achieve the same purpose in SRB and support has been provided to that end. Multisectoral cooperation for universal access to contraception is another dimension for current and future efforts. It was also highlighted that activities were carried out during 2018 to improve maternal and new-born health through implementing, evaluating and acting on the recommendations of reviews of severe maternal complications.

WHO, EU, UNFPA, UNICEF remain the main and most loyal partners of the RHDCs in line with their mandate. The cooperation shall be strengthened further on.

Main challenges:

- Lack of medication and high burden of out-of-pocket expenditure
- Sustainable source of financing
- Solid pool of experts at regional level
- The recognition of diplomas is one of the main challenges in HR
- More RHDC initiatives
- Communicate more and better
- Share priorities, opportunities, needs
- Make better use of National Focal Points
- Joint relevant ongoing regional activities
- A TAIEX procedure and application process to be followed by the respective countries with the support of the SEEHN Secretariat.



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Recommendations:

- Facilitate stronger regional cooperation in Public Health (PH) in SEE;
- Implement the Chisinau Pledge through the lens of Agenda 2030 and Health 2020 by promoting innovation, capacity building and sustainable partnerships;
- Identify pull/push triggers for migration; establish mechanisms for planning and retaining the HR in the health systems in their respective countries; added value of the circular migration;
- Establish a roster network of experts and institutions in Public Health in the SEEHN MS;
- A National Focal Points list shall be collected and made available for the SEEHN, along with Terms of Reference.

Common possibilities at regional level for implementing the Chisinau Pledge Action Plan towards achieving Health 2020 and SDGs Agenda 2030

Dr Mira Dasic listed the objectives of the Chisinau Pledge Action Plan. The activities listed under the Action Plan are in line with the main priorities of Health 2020: a European policy framework for health and well-being (WHO) and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Part of the document was shared and as soon as it is finalised it will be shared with the RHDCs. However, the technical assistance of RHDCs is very welcomed and relied on in the further implementation process.

MKD proposed that concrete actions should be defined so that it is easier to track the activities implemented and what remains to be done. The planning process shall be completed by the end of the year. The budget allocation shall be coordinated specifically with each country and each country will internally have its own process of financial resources allocation.

Standard Operating Procedures, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures

The SOPs are aimed at serving as a tool and as clear guidelines for proper management of the SEEHN Regional Health Development Centres, with well-defined rights and accountability to the SEEHN and SEE countries. An update on the coordination process of the Standard Operational Procedures of the SEEHN RHDCs was provided. Newly developed chapters on Monitoring and Evaluation and Performance assessment were presented and shared. Participants agreed, in principle, to provide suggestions to the SEEHN Secretariat within a two-week's



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delay. The proposal that an expert in the evaluation procedure might be present shall be mandatory not optional.

RHDCs' Status

The State of Israel experts presented the situation on nursing and specifically the issue of human resources. Academic nursing has been continuously growing in Israel in the last decade. The aim is to reach the OECD average of 6.2 per 1000 population. The trend is continuously rising and the government is fully supporting the programme. Israel is diversifying the nurse role and its scope of work within the healthcare delivery process. One of the novelties to be launched next year is a clinical nurse practitioner profession that will even be mandated with a managerial role (have the right to open a clinic). The improvement is based on a bottom-up process of consultations with nurses.

The presentation was delivered in the context of a possible RHDC on Nursing to be confirmed by the Government of the State of Israel. The audience congratulated and welcomed the idea of a new RHDC on Nursing.

Another possibility for the RHDCs is to gradually develop into WHO Regional Collaborating Centres.

Dr Mira Dasic shared an overview of the current status of the RHDCs. Advantages and expected efforts were highlighted. Some of the current inactive RHDCs, such as the one on Transplant or Blood Safety, have to be re-evaluated as part of the SEEHN. New opportunities for additional RHDCs were listed, such as PHC, environment and health, aging, etc.

Future plans on regional level:

- Work towards building a joint platform for public health emergencies;
- Focus on capacity building, exchange of experiences, innovative solutions, and sustainable partnerships;
- Self-assessment of the public health services in all countries to be discussed as it implies considerable funds;
- Establish agreements with other institutions;
- Collaborate with other networks;
- Identify other partners;
- Ministerial Conference possibly on promotion of the Healthy and Active Aging in the SEEHN in May in 2019.



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Conclusions and recommendations:

- The participants acknowledged the importance and the efforts of the SEEHN Secretariat in strengthening the regional work in different areas of the health systems;
- A calendar of events shall be shared by the SEEHN Secretariat in the near future;
- It is worth learning from the cross-border cooperation experience of ROM and BUL;
- The RHDCs are expected to send Concept Notes to be considered for funding from the SEEHN Secretariat. A competition shall be opened for all the Centres and the best one will receive funding for its regional initiative. The activity shall be carried out by the end of 2018.
- The centres should be used more actively and frequently in the processes of developing regional policies and good practices and in monitoring and evaluation of existing practices, legislation, policies, strategies, etc.
- The RHDCs should consider applying for WHO collaborating centres status.
- A rooster shall be launched in early 2019 to prepare a software programme and to make it available for everyone. The RHDCs' proposals will be welcomed. A formal, open and transparent selection process shall be put in place.
- The SEEHN representatives welcomed the idea of a new RHDC on Nursing to be established in ISR.
- A TAIEX procedure and application process should be followed by the respective countries with the support of the SEEHN Secretariat.
- WHO, EU, UNFPA, UNICEF remain the main and most loyal partners of the RHDCs in line with their mandate. The cooperation shall be strengthened further on within the framework of the Chisinau Pledge implementation.
- Bulgaria expressed their wish to keep the current RHDC on Antimicrobial Resistance and committed to starting regional activities.
- The SEEHN Secretariat shall incorporate and consider some of the future plans for 2019 in the SEEHN calendar, such as: 16+1 Conference of Ministers to be held in Bulgaria in May 2019, OCEMN Health Ministers meeting to be organised in May-June 2019.



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- The representatives of nine SEEHN countries acknowledged the NCDs indicators document presented by the RHDC on NCD from Montenegro and will take the document for country consultations and follow-up approval.
- The Republic of Moldova RHDC sent a TAIEX application on Human Resources to the European Commission, thus a workshop is expected to take place in 2019.
- The workshop report and conclusions focused on the RHDCs Annual Meeting should be presented to the Plenary Meeting in Skopje next year.

Rapporteur:

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