



JOINT STATEMENT

DELIVERED BY MS OGERTA MANASTIRLIU,
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION,
THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA, SEE HEALTH NETWORK PRESIDENCY

*ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTH - EASTERN EUROPE HEALTH NETWORK
AT THE 72ND SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE*

WITHIN THE PLENARY SESSION:

Discussion on the addresses by the Director-General and the Regional Director
Tel-Aviv, 12 September 2022
11:30–13:00

*Your Excellences, Director-General,
Regional Director,
Honourable ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

I have the honor to address you on behalf of the **Member States of the South-Eastern Europe Health Network** that have associated themselves with this statement: the Republic of Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the State of Israel, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Romania and the Republic of Serbia.

There are five key messages that we want to share today:

First: We have just endorsed our **Belgrade Pledge 2022-2026, the fifth in more than 20 years of our efforts to support health in our countries and the region.** Both WHO EPW and the global SDG Agenda present common language and pathway for health and well-being in our European region and globally today. Our collaboration remains a solid instrument to support Member States' efforts to deliver on our regional and global commitments.

Second: We recognized the unjustifiable health gap among our Member States and the efforts that WHO, and you, dear Hans, are investing into facilitating inclusive processes and tailoring the most rational approaches to address such a challenge in the European Region. Thus, in our Pledge, we cantered our action to the **Roadmap for Health and Well-Being in the Western Balkans (2021-2025)** to channel our investments into the Roadmaps' joint initiatives of countries and partners for the most significant impact to close those gaps.



Third: In those times of multiple crises, we stay dedicated to our mandate for **peace for health**. We are committed to supporting the integrative action of European countries and partners to mitigate the adverse health consequences of those crises. We acknowledge WHO Europe's support of our efforts. **We consider the Western Balkans Health Roadmap a potent tool for peace that supports delivering on the Global WHO Peace for Health Strategy.**

Fourth: We wish to congratulate WHO on its new **Country Presence Strategy**. It reflects your constant thrive, dear Hans, to serve countries better and deliver more. We welcome emphasizing the need to rationalize efforts, amongst others, through subregional collaboration as a robust mechanism for channelling joint action to target shared challenges in the subregions.

Dear colleagues and friends,

Our founding Dubrovnik Pledge committed to “meeting the health needs of vulnerable populations in South-eastern Europe. At the beginning of the third decade of our joint leadership for health, we maintained the same focus. This decade has started with a massive challenge of COVID-19, which, quite unfortunately, holds the promise of perpetuating and intercepting crises. From our history of collaboration, we've learned the value of acting together in solidarity and building bridges across countries, focusing on people. We will continue to capitalize on networking for health and spread the spirit of togetherness in building and rebuilding societies and economies of well-being, with health at the center and leaving no one behind.

On behalf of South–East Europe's the Member States, I express our gratitude to the WHO European Region for the unwavering support and **Dr. Hans Kluge's leadership** and dedication that we witness daily through our bilateral and subregional endeavors.

Let me finish by reiterating our Belgrade Pledge call to countries and partners to join forces with SEEHN for better health in South-eastern Europe and beyond.

I thank you for your attention.