



Republic of Albania

SITE: MARITIM PLAZA HOTEL

TIRANA, ALBANIA

SUMMARY NOTE ON
THE 46TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SEE HEALTH NETWORK:
CROSS-SECTORAL AND ALL SOCIETY COLLABORATION FOR BETTER HEALTH
SYSTEM RESILIENCE: IMPROVE VACCINE ACCEPTANCE BY ADDRESSING
MISINFORMATION

5-6 JUNE 2023

TIRANA, REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

SEE HEALTH NETWORK MEMBER STATES



PARTNERS



The South-eastern Europe Health Network expresses its appreciations to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Albania for its continuous support during the SEEHN Presidency for the period (July 2022 – June 2023)



Photo credit: SEEHN Secretariat



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ABBREVIATIONS

ALB	Albania
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BGR	Bulgaria
CEI	Central European Initiative
HRV	Croatia
EU	European Union
Ex COM	Executive Committee
FPs	Focal Points
HWF	Health workforce
HCW	Healthcare workers
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISR	State of Israel
MDA	Republic of Moldova
MH	Mental Health
MKD	Republic of North Macedonia
MNE	Montenegro
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSs	Member States
NCD	Non communicable Disease
NHC	National Health Coordinator
RCC	Regional Coordination Council
RHDC	Regional Health Development Center
ROU	Romania
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SECID	Southeast European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SEEHN	South Eastern Europe Health Network
SRB	Serbia
SVN	Slovenia
WBs	Western Balkans
WHO	World Health Organization



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1. SUMMARY BACKGROUND

The **Albanian Presidency** of the South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) was held in the period from the 1st of July 2022 until 30th June 2023. The presidency mandate concluded with the organization of the 46th Plenary Meeting, held in hybrid mode from 5th to 6th June 2023, in Tirana, ALB.

The event was **attended** by the National Health Coordinators and/or Alternates of the Member States to the SEEHN, directors of the SEEHN Regional Health Development Centers (RHDC), representatives from the partner countries: Croatia and partner international organizations: the Central European Initiative (CEI), Council of Europe (EDQM), Institute of Public Health (ISS), Rome, Italy (online), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) (online), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Ambassadors/Representatives of Embassies of BGR, MKD and SRB, UN Resident Coordinator ALB, Delegation of the European Union to ALB. The final **list of participants** is presented in Annex 2 of this Summary note.

The SEEHN Secretariat expresses its sincerest gratitude and deep appreciation to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of ALB and the special involvement and contribution of the RHDC on Communicable Diseases (SECID) from ALB hosted by the Institute of Public Health especially for the synergetic work with the SEEHN Secretariat in the organization of the 46th Plenary Meeting,

The meeting aimed to achieve the following:

- Take stock of the SEEHN action under Albanian Presidency 2022-2023.
- Transfer the Presidency mandate to Bosnia and Herzegovina and establish the activity Roadmap.
- Advance the concepts of building resilient health systems through improving vaccine acceptance by addressing misinformation.
- Discuss and evaluate latest procedures to finalize the Belgrade Pledge approval, ultimately to contribute to the health, well-being and prosperity goals in South East Europe by 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030.
- Discuss and decide on the Belgrade Pledge Action Plan development and consultative process.
- Revisit and discuss the SEEHN RHDCs action and opportunities for further progress.
- Strengthen the on-going initiatives with partners and development new avenues for collaborations.

The **46th Plenary Meeting** has been designed around seven sessions which had an overall main aim to strengthen SEEHN as organization yet to concentrate on its structures and focus on thematic areas to continue strategic regional work also with its partners.

The **first session** dedicated to the welcoming remarks set the tone and the expected outcome of the meeting. The main proposal was to consider the process and modalities around the Belgrade Pledge Action Plan development and the main priority areas of intervention:

- Moving toward universal health coverage (UHC):

- ✓ Ensure financial protection and access to medicines
- ✓ Safeguard the quality of health care and patient safety
- Preserve human capital for health:
 1. Initiative to Expand and Retain Human Capital for Health
 2. Initiative for Health Worker Education, streamline and match the team skill-mix, promotion and implementation of nursing leadership
- Promote mental health and social care services
- Empowerment through digital health
- Increase resilience to health emergencies
- Extend vaccination benefits across the life course
- Combat avoidable non-communicable diseases.

The **session two** on *Cross-sectoral collaboration for a better emergency response: Improve vaccine acceptance: current trends on hesitancy and possible solutions*, has been shaped mainly by our founding partner expertise: WHO Health Emergency Coordinator, Balkan Hub Europe and the Regional Adviser for Vaccine-preventable Diseases and Immunization. The speakers focused on effective emergency coordination for health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience and immunization demand and acceptance and its contribution towards resilient health system – from COVID-19 vaccines to routine vaccines and vaccination. Moreover this session was complemented by the Albanian experience from a media expert tackling misinformation.

The **session three** has been built upon the previous European and global perspective accompanied by the panel discussion of the SEEHN Member States. The discussion has been moderated by Dr Silvia Bino, SEEHN RHDC on Communicable Diseases, Director, SECID, based on previously prepared and distributed questions to have a structured and comparative prospective on the SEE situation related to the way COVID-19 has influenced public health emergency preparedness, the way COVID-19 did influence vaccine demand in the country, influenza vaccination demand and programs, new vaccines, evolving challenges and the way forward based on lessons learned. The detailed policy summary on the vaccination hesitancy and addressing misinformation will be developed as a follow-up by SECID at the SEE regional level.

Session 4: Partners collaborations and opportunities for interventions focused on the currently launched collaboration and potential areas for future partnerships. The implementation of pharmaceutical care in SEE promoted through a joint SEEHN-Council of Europe/EDQM project for a pilot study was presented by our partner EDQM. The next steps shall be taken upon the findings for individual countries as well as regional activities to advance quality of care through pharmaceutical care. Another committed partner the Central European Initiative (CEI) emphasized the regional cooperation to foster good health and well-being for all. Moreover, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) advocated to improve access to COVID-19 vaccination for migrants and also IOM experiences to increasing vaccine confidence were presented. The potential to create cross-cutting initiatives shall be taken upon by the SEEHN Secretariat to be led by the next presidency.



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Session 5: SEEHN Presidency Report and SEEHN Road Map dived deep into the previous activity report during the July 2022-June2023 period under the Albanian presidency, followed by the Bosnia and Herzegovina plan for the future presidency year to focus on mental health and human resources. Future detailed activity plan shall be integrated into the Belgrade Pledge endorsement process and built upon a medium-term activity plan for the entire region.

Session 6 and 7 focused on the managerial issues of the past and future presidencies (financial reporting and planning, pending contributions, contribution base, etc.) also complemented by the technical direct support provided by the SEEHN Secretariat to the member states and channelled through them (the RHDCs technical hubs and the EU support (TAIEX) to the thematic regional multi-country meetings).

The SEEHN 46th Plenary Meeting detailed programme, is presented in the Annex 1.

2. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, multiple, simultaneous, complex emergencies and consequent responses impacting our Region, and their following responses, characterize the 2022–2023 period.

The SEEHN Secretariat mobilized and sought to respond to some of this emergencies while focusing on several core priorities: health diplomacy, mental health emergency preparedness and response and quality of medicines through strengthening capacities and specific technical work.

The Secretariat's work was driven by these priorities and substantial advancements have been made within each of these over the past year consequently benefitting the entire SEE region. This included delivering workshops and trainings; setting up new initiatives; providing instrumental data and evidence to inform policy and decision-making; and more.

Several priority areas will be translated into further actions:

1. Commitment to strengthen capacities of the healthcare personnel –to work on retention policies, match the skill-mix as well as to promote health system efficiency through coupling the demand and supply, promote the nursing leadership.

2. To address mental health, by prioritizing the healthcare personnel. Actions in this area to be driven on evidence-based policies. This area shall be expanded to explore also behavioural based options.

3. Address the misinformation to increase the vaccination rates to the pre-pandemic levels. Explore all society approach and new communication media outlets to increase outreach and offer ready solutions for governments to act upon.

4. Digitalisation/mHealth. 27 of the European countries have implemented digital tools for contact tracing. However, in the previous years the digital strategy still did not have the

approval due to many issues among other people trust and data protection. Thus, at this stage trust shall be addressed including what has been done, what can be adjusted and implemented at the local level- nationally - cities and communities. Better NCDs management through digital solutions.

5. Improve access to medicines and overall quality of care. The report prepared with **Council of Europe (EDQM)**: related to the **Implementation of pharmaceutical care in SEE: South Eastern Europe region study**, to be taken to the next stage of implementation and tailored solutions package for individual countries and regional actions.

6. Partnerships. It is not a simple math $1+1=2$ but instead it geometrically grows in time once action set in motion. We are going to look into all potential partnerships and succeed by assisting one another in promoting overall wellbeing, universal health care, and services that put the needs of people first.

From a more technical prospective, the Plenary meeting took the following conclusions/decisions which SEEHN shall follow:

1. The next SEEHN **Presidency** is accepted by **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and committed to a length of one year (July 2023-June 2024). The Plenary approved the draft proposal of the **SEEHN Roadmap under the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina**. The next 47th SEEHN Plenary Meeting to be organized online or in person in Sarajevo end of June 2024.
2. SEEHN Secretariat to keep further discussions on the development of the **Belgrade Pledge Action Plan**. To establish a working group and reconvene for a guided workshop to be held and agreed among SEEHN including in a larger format the founding partners WHO Regional Office for Europe and other interested partners. The activity shall be completed by the end of the first trimester of 2024. *Immediate action:* SEEHN Secretariat to develop Terms of reference for the members of the Working group and to send request to MSs and/or partners for appointing member/s to the Working group.
3. SEEHN to capitalise on the experience and expertise of **Bosnia and Herzegovina on mental health** to drive auctions and export precious knowledge to the SEE region, in particular promoting the community mental health services.
4. SEEHN Secretariat to implement the approved **Community Mental Health Services in the SEEHN MSs - WBs and beyond: challenges, progress and boost-up policies** jointly with our partner Central European Initiative. Additionally, SEEHN to sign a MOU with CEI and expand the scope and purpose of the bilateral cooperation. *Immediate action:* SEEHN Secretariat to share the draft MoU for cooperation with SEEHN NHCs and Alternates for their information.
5. **Regional Health Development Centers** have been put in the **center** of the SEEHN activities and shall follow this vector as fundamental structures of the Network. In this terms, SEEHN Secretariat will continue the agreed financial support to be provided to RHDCs, mainly aimed for organizing round tables with NFPs in the respective areas to

agree on priorities and develop mid-term action plans. Thus, under the small grant scheme the 4 events and two research initiatives to be carried out in the period under the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency.

6. **Plenary approved** the candidacy presented by the Ministry of Health of Romania, **for establishing SEEHN RHDC on nursing and midwifery** to be hosted by the **Order of Nurses, Midwives and Medical Assistants**, in Bucharest, Romania; Immediate action: SEEHN Secretariat to prepare the Decision for establishing of RHDC on nursing and midwifery, and share it with NHCs and Alternates; to develop a regional plan of actions together with newly established RHDC.
7. SEEHN Secretariat to follow with Israel Ministry of Health, on their proposal for establishing a **RHDC on genomics and personalized medicine** as well as to explore some other areas for regional technical cooperation, to be further coordinated with SEEHN MSs.
8. SEEHN to place a special emphasis and efforts to the **Healthcare workers**. In this respect, harness the Bucharest Declaration provisions to contribute and build upon the commitment to recognize the healthcare workers value to society and invest in them appropriately, for the benefit of all.
9. SEEHN Secretariat and RHDC on NCD to implement the TAIEX Multicounty **Workshop on NCDs' population based registries in the SEEHN Member States (MNE)** to be held in October 2023, in Podgorica, Montenegro and to share the outcomes aimed to be taken forward into national plans.
10. SEEHN Secretariat along with SEEHN RHDCs to develop new project applications for **multi-country workshops to be applied by individual countries to the EC TAIEX instrument**.
11. Finally, ongoing and planned activities with SEEHN partners were shared and discussed, acknowledging and recognizing the importance of their continuous support to the SEEHN:
 - **WHO Europe**
 - *Roadmap for Health and Well-being in the Western Balkans 2021–2025, to serve as overarching frame for the proposed actions.*
 - **Regional Cooperation Council** (*to explore further possibilities to advance common actions regionally*)
 - **EHFG** (*a session on mental health and the capacity building Initiative for decision makers from the SEEHN member states, to be organized within EHFG 2023*)
 - **Republic of Slovenia** (*support to the International Youth Health Organization; organisation of an International Conference on the Health System reforms and resilience or on other topic, on 4-5 December 2023*);
 - **Croatia** (*revitalise transplantation exchange of experience and kick-off new areas of partnerships*)



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12. In addition, Plenary meeting agreed the SEEHN Secretariat to continue with their efforts to revitalize the cooperation with the **remaining SEEHN partners**, by review of the signed Memorandums of cooperation and defining plan of activities which is real, timely and achievable.



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Annex 1 Final Programme

46TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SEE HEALTH NETWORK CROSS-SECTORAL AND ALL SOCIETY COLLABORATION FOR BETTER HEALTH SYSTEM RESILIENCE: IMPROVE VACCINE ACCEPTANCE BY ADDRESSING MISINFORMATION

5-6 JUNE 2023

DATE: 02 JUNE 2023

MARITIM HOTEL PLAZA

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

TIRANA, ALBANIA

PROGRAMME

ALL HOURS IN THE PROGRAMME ARE IN LOCAL TIME (CET)

Sunday, 4 June 2023		GUIDANCE FOR CHAIRS AND FACILITATORS
Arrival of participants	Pick-up of all participants to be organized by the Albanian Presidency	Ministry of Health is organizing airport transfers for all participants
20:00-21:00	Dinner in the hotel Restaurant	Dinner is organized by SEEHN Secretariat for all guests (SEEHN MSs and partners' representatives) staying at hotel
Monday, 5 June 2023		
VENUE: MARITIM PLAZA HOTEL TIRANA		
9:30 – 10:00	Registration of participants	

<p>10:00-10:20</p>	<p>Session 1: Welcome remarks</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Ms Sonila Mlloja Cemurati, journalist, State Albanian TV</p> <p>Opening addresses by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Mejvis Kola, Ministry of Health, Albania • Dr. Svetlana Nicolaescu, Chair of the SEEHN Executive Committee, MoH of the Republic of Moldova (online) • Dr Geraldine McWeeney, WHO Representative in Albania • Dr Mira Jovanovski Dasic, Head SEEHN Secretariat 	<p>Facilitator introduces the topic and a brief description relevant to the topic</p>
<p>10:20 -11:30</p>	<p>Session 2: Cross-sectoral collaboration for a better emergency response. Improve vaccine acceptance: current trends on hesitancy and possible solutions</p> <p><i>Presentation: Effective emergency coordination for health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience.</i></p> <p><i>Presenter: Dr Abeyayehu Assefa Mengistu</i>, WHO Health Emergency Coordinator, Balkan Hub Europe, WHO (online)</p> <p><i>Presentation: Immunization demand and acceptance & its contribution towards resilient health system – From COVID-19 vaccines to Routine Vaccines and Vaccination</i></p> <p><i>Presenter: Dr Siddhartha Sankar Datta</i>, Regional Adviser - Vaccine-preventable Diseases and Immunization, WHO Regional Office for Europe (online)</p> <p><i>Presentation: Experience of Albania to limit misinformation</i></p> <p><i>Presenters:</i> Ms Sonila Mlloja Cemurati, journalist, State Albanian TV</p>	<p>Set the scene view objective to improve new and old vaccines acceptance by addressing misinformation and cross sector and all society collaboration</p>
<p>11:30-12:00</p>	<p>Coffee break</p> <p>Family Photo of Participants</p>	

<p>12:00-13:00</p>	<p>Session 3: Panel discussion with SEEHN Member States</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Dr Silvia Bino</i>, SEEHN RHDC on Communicable Diseases, Director, SECID</p>	<p>Each SEEHN MSs to be ready to share information on the Country current status related to initiatives to introduce new vaccines and address vaccine hesitancy (3-5 minutes each)</p>
<p>13:00-14:00</p>	<p>Lunch break</p>	
<p>14:00-15:00</p>	<p>Session 4: Partners collaborations and avenues for interventions</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Dr Mira Jovanovski-Dasic</i>, Head SEEHN Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presentation: Implementation of pharmaceutical care in SEE: joint SEEHN-Council of Europe/EDQM project for a pilot study <i>Presenter: Mr Francois-Xavier Lery</i>, EDQM, Council of Europe ➤ Presentation: CEI regional cooperation to foster good health and well-being for all <i>Presenter: Ms Ana Sinkovic</i>, Project Manager, Focal Point for Health Strategies and Emergencies response CEI Presentation: Access to COVID-19 vaccination for migrants and increasing vaccine confidence – IOM experiences <i>Presenter: Ms Ursula Wagner</i>, Regional Migration Health Coordinator IOM 	
<p>15:00 – 15:30</p>	<p>Session 5: SEEHN Presidency Report and SEEHN Road Map</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Dr Mira Jovanovski-Dasic</i>, Head SEEHN Secretariat</p> <p>Presentation: Albanian Presidency Report (July 2022- June 2023)</p> <p>Presenter: Ms Mejvis Kola, SEEHN National Health Coordinator, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Republic of Albania</p> <p>SEEHN Road Map under the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (July 2023- June 2024)</p> <p>Presenter: Ms Snjezana Brckalo, SEEHN Alternate National Focal Point, Ministry of Civil</p>	

	Affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina	
15:30-16:00	Debrief of the DAY 1	
19:30	<p>Official dinner offered by the Albanian Presidency</p> <p>Participants will have arranged pick-up at 19:00 in front of the hotel.</p>	<p>Venue: Restaurant Sofra Ariut https://www.sofraeariut.com/</p>
<p>Tuesday, 6 June 2023</p> <p>VENUE: MARITIM PLAZA HOTEL TIRANA</p>		
10:30-11:30	<p><i>Session 6: Briefing on the Belgrade Pledge signing and strategic planning for the next four years: the role of RHDCs and partners</i></p> <p>Facilitator: Dr Mira Jovanovski-Dasic, Head SEEHN Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the Belgrade Pledge signing and strategic planning for the next four years • Action Plan development • RHDCs roles as implementing hubs and role of partners <p>Q&A session</p>	<p>Facilitator introduces the topic and a brief description relevant to the topic</p> <p>Round table discussion to be facilitated by the Facilitator</p>
11:30-12:00	Coffee break	
12:00 – 13:00	<p>Closed Session 7: SEEHN Governance</p> <p>Facilitator: Dr Mira Jovanovski- Dasic, Head SEEHN Secretariat</p> <p><u>SEEHN Secretariat</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat Semi Annual Financial Report (January-June 2023) • Pending contributions for 2022– 2023 • Briefing on the EC TAIEX Multi-country workshops • Cooperation with SEEHN RHDCs (Annual Technical Meeting, Grant scheme) • Candidacy from Ministry of Health of Romania, for establishing SEEHN RHDC on nursing and midwifery (presentation and discussion) 	<p>ONLY for National Health Coordinators and/or Alternates (in person and/or online)</p>



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13:00-13:30	Conclusions and recommendations	
13:30-14:30	Lunch break	
	Departure of participants in the afternoon and next day (7 June 2023) Transfers to airport are arranged 2.5h before your flight in front of Maritim Plaza Hotel	Albanian Presidency

Annex 2 List of Participants (available upon request)

NOTE: All other supporting documents and additional information on the 46th SEEHN Plenary meeting are available at SEEHN Secretariat upon request.