



**Partnership Annual Conference (PAC)
Sixth Conference
Oslo, Norway
25 November 2009**

Reference	PAC 6/6.1/2
Title	Taking forward the regional cooperation in health and social well-being and ensuring future success of the NDPHS
Submitted by	Committee of Senior Representatives
Summary / Note	<p>This paper presents several matters for the attention of and resolution by the Partnership Annual Conference, which the CSR considers are of critical importance for the Partnership to be able to successfully deliver during the coming few years.</p> <p>It builds on the <i>ad hoc</i> NDPHS Strategy Working Group's report, which was approved, with a few revisions, by the CSR during its meeting in mid-October 2009 (submitted as document PAC 6/6.1/1).</p>
Requested action	For decision

The importance of regional cooperation in public health and social well-being

The new Northern Dimension policy, which has been jointly adopted by the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia, specifies six priority sectors for concerted action. The NDPHS, which operates within the framework of this policy, is the forum for cooperation in one of those sectors, namely "Social welfare and health care, including prevention of communicable diseases and life-style related diseases and promotion of cooperation between health and social services."

During their 7th Baltic Sea States Summit in 2008 **"the Heads of Governments acknowledged the importance of good public health and social well-being," and agreed that "regional efforts in these fields should, therefore, be continued and strengthened." To that end, they reiterated their commitment to the NDPHS.**

Recent developments in our region, in Europe and globally only confirm how much our countries depend upon one another, and how important it is that they closely cooperate and coordinate actions that are likely to have impact on other countries. International cooperation is needed to help meet the challenges facing our region and to promote positive developments. The NDPHS provides a unique platform for concerted action in our sector through increased cooperation and enhanced coordination of international activities in the region.

Five-year evaluation of the Partnership and its follow-up deliver important messages and pave the way for a new NDPHS strategy

In accordance with the "Declaration concerning the establishment of a NDPHS" (Oslo Declaration) of 2003, an overall review and evaluation of the Partnership was carried out in 2008. It was followed-up in 2009 by an *ad hoc* NDPHS Strategy Working Group (SWG) that prepared a series of recommendations and proposed a NDPHS strategy for the coming four years. These recommendations have been approved, with a few revisions, by the NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR).

Consistent with the above, **the Committee of Senior Representative would like to bring the following to the attention of the Partnership Annual Conference:**

1. The track record of the Partnership's achievements clearly demonstrates that it is doing important work, which contributes to improving public health, especially if the relatively modest financial resources allocated for the NDPHS work are taken into account.
2. Owing to its tools, such as a broad governance framework, a network of outstanding experts, the NDPHS Database and the NDPHS Project Pipeline, the Partnership is well equipped to facilitate or support regional efforts in its own field of expertise, among them the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, in which the NDPHS has agreed to take the Lead Partner role for the Health priority sub-area.
3. However, despite the above, the Partnership is struggling with some hindrances that can be detrimental to its future success. It is especially damaging to the spirit of partnership that some contributions to the NDPHS budget are missing. Further, in order to be successful in its efforts and ensure that concrete benefits be brought to the people in our region, the Partnership needs to enjoy a commitment of all its Partners. This commitment should be reflected through their active involvement coupled with the provision of ample resources for the work of the Partnership's Expert Groups. As all the Partners benefit from the Partnership's work, they must all be prepared to also take their fair share in the financial burden.

Further, **the Committee of Senior Representative invites the Partnership Annual Conference to agree on the following:**

1. To adopt the new strategy of the NDPHS, which will guide the Partnership's work during the coming four years and builds around the "Vision of the NDPHS in 2013," as approved by the CSR during its meeting on 15-16 October in Riga, Latvia. This strategy places focus on policy and strategy development, as well as coordination and project facilitation. It underlines the need to strengthen the social well-being dimension in the NDPHS work and foresees that the currently operating four NDPHS Expert Groups will be restructured and, where necessary, new groups be established, all of which will focus on the implementation of concrete time-bound actions. The goals and operational targets, which are at the heart of the strategy, aim to make the Partnership's work more focused and responsive to regional challenges.
2. To welcome the CSR decision that the NDPHS would take the Lead Partner role for the Health priority sub-area of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.
3. To strengthen efforts aimed to increase the Partnership's visibility in the capitals of the Partner Countries, and to ensure proper support to the Partnership, which is indispensable for the NDPHS to successfully discharge its responsibilities.
4. To recall that the Heads of Government from the Baltic Sea States underlined the importance of continued efforts to deliver concrete results based on the principle of co-financing from the Northern Dimension Partners.
5. To agree to take efforts to provide ample resources for the Partnership, most notably for running its Secretariat and Expert Groups, as well as for the development and facilitation of concrete, project-based activities so that it would continue both delivering concrete and pragmatic activities and achieving tangible results benefiting people in our region.
6. To express their support for the expedite concluding of an agreement on the establishment of the NDPHS Secretariat with its own legal capacity, which should, *inter alia*, help ensure financial stability of the Secretariat.