

**Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR)
Thirty-third Meeting
27 November 2020
Online**

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| Title | Minutes from the 33 rd Meeting of the NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives |
| Submitted by | Secretariat |
| Summary / Note | This document outlines the main discussion points and decisions made during the 33 rd meeting of the CSR. The list of participants is available on the meeting page on the NDPHS website |

1. Opening of the meeting and welcome.

The meeting was opened and chaired by Ms. Katarzyna Rutkowska, the NDPHS CSR Chair, the Ministry of Health of Poland.

Dr. Ülla-Karin Nurm, the Director of the NDPHS Secretariat and Mr. Niclas Jacobson, the CSR Co-Chair, welcomed the participants.

The Meeting held a moment of silence in memory of Prof. Rafael Oganov.

2. Adoption of the agenda.

The Meeting **adopted** the agenda of the meeting as submitted in document CSR 33/2/Rev 1 and agreed on the following procedure of the adoption of the meeting minutes: the draft CSR 33 meeting minutes would be sent to the participants on 4 December 2020 and comments on the draft would be due, at the latest, on 11 December 2020. The revised minutes would be distributed on 15 December 2020, to be adopted provided that no further comments are submitted until 18 December 2020.

Germany requested to address the question of the business model and working methods of the Partnership and the Meeting agreed to do this in the agenda item 6.

3. Information by the NDPHS Secretariat.

The Secretariat thanked Sweden for providing the Secretariat with new premises and help in the process of relocation. Regarding projects, the Secretariat informed that the EU grant application has been formally approved and activities will start from 11 January 2021. Furthermore, an update was presented on the implementation of the AgeFLAG and “PA Health Support 3” projects, including a workshop “[The Art of Staying Healthy – Can Culture Improve our Well-being?](#)” organized on 6 October together with the ND Partnership on Culture. The workshop explored the evidence of the importance of culture-based interventions for improved health and well-being and was very well attended. The results of the workshop were summarized in a visually attractive illustration by a professional illustrator and this way of presenting the results of the NDPHS work could also be used in the future.

The Meeting **took note** of the presented information with appreciation and invited the Secretariat to continue efforts of promoting the NDPHS' work.

Sweden noted that all CSR members shall help with disseminating such information within the national administrations.

4. Updates by Partners.

Germany informed that, as expressed in the letter sent to the CSR Chair in September, it can no longer chair the NDPHS Expert Group on Prison Health (PH EG) from 2021 onwards. It further informed about the WHO reform process that is included in the Germany's EU Presidency programme.

The Secretariat informed that it has agreed with the WHO Europe to co-organize the next PH EG meeting online on 18 February 2021.

Russia informed about the outcomes of the [Northern Dimension Steering Group meeting](#) held on 3 November 2020 and the [Northern Dimension Business Forum](#) held on 20 November 2020. It was noted that NDPHS experts contributed to the work of the parallel session on Health of the Forum. Among the conclusions of this parallel session were: strengthening of collaboration with the NDPHS in order to develop cross-sectoral initiatives and inviting the Secretariat to the next Business Forum, which should take place in St.Petersburg in April 2021.

The WHO informed about the autumn meeting of the Regional Committee and adoption of the European Programme for Work 2020-2025 (EPW), that sets the strategic priorities for the next five years, which are very much in line with the priorities of the new NDPHS strategy. The EPW also stresses the importance of partnerships at sub-regional level, which means that there will be an increased emphasis from the WHO Europe to work with networks such as NDPHS and SEEHN. The WHO further informed about the launch of the Oslo Medicines Initiative and the Monti Commission (the Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development to rethink policy priorities in light of COVID-19 pandemics).

The EU informed that the Support Fund of the ND Environmental Partnership has been extended by five more years, which is a sign of the value that Partners place in this cooperation.

The Meeting **took note** of the presented information.

5. Presentation by the NDPHS Expert Groups

The ASA EG noted that it has been possible to use the COVID-19 pandemic to their advantage by having more meetings than before. One of the challenges that the EG plans to address are novel nicotine and tobacco products, by holding expert consultations/round tables to support countries in building capacity to effectively regulate these products and by preparing a policy brief describing regulatory and policy options available. The ultimate aim is to drive the wider tobacco control agenda by closing the loopholes exploited by tobacco and related industries, through these products, to undermine tobacco control policies. The support of the CSR would be needed to make this activity visible, sharing the findings of the EG within their respective Ministries and other parties interested.

The HIV, TB & AI EG mentioned that a challenge for the performance of the group is that many of the experts in the EG are heavily involved in the response to COVID-19. For the HIV, TB & AI situation there is a risk that previously gained results are lost because these issues are in the shade of the COVID-19 situation. The EG needs to closely monitor the situation on access to care and

provision of services. The EG further presented an international online conference on COVID-19, which is a collaboration between the HIV, TB & AI EG, the Barents Region HIV/TB program and the General Consulate of Finland to St. Petersburg – a two-day event on 17 and 18 December. The key purpose of the event is to illuminate how the pandemic has impacted service providers around the region, how they are coping, what are perceptions, problems and expectations of their clients.

The NCD EG presented an update of the project “A Healthy Boost – Urban Labs for Better Health for All in the Baltic Sea Region – boosting cross-sectorial cooperation for health and well-being in the cities”, which is implemented in 2019 - 2021. Furthermore, the renewed PYLL-2-Study (funded from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Barents Sea, Barents and Arctic cooperation program) is progressing well and data analysis is going on. The next step will be organization of three EU-funded workshops to present and discuss the collected data. An EU grant-supported project “Toolkit to strengthen health literacy in the Baltic Sea Region” will start in 2021. Among the new planned activities are an epidemiological survey based on the same principles in all ND countries, a joint epidemiological study “Health in all ages – Healthy schools”, a study on characteristics of the neighborhood environment examining the links between the neighborhood environment and lifestyles, an online survey evaluating the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on lifestyles and a study “NCDs in primary care and COVID-19”.

The OSH EG informed about three projects aimed at contributing to the improvement of reliable and comparable data on occupational accidents and diseases and related costs in the Northern Dimension countries, EU and globally, that have been carried out in a collaboration of OSH EG and the Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety (BSN). The “Realloc Accidents” (Reliable occupational accident registration - indicator for prevention) project aimed to provide sufficient background information on existing situation regarding occupational accidents at workplaces and to develop a larger scale project in Baltic Sea Region (with potential to expand across other EU regions). The “Cost of lost labour input” project aimed to find a generally acceptable method to calculate the minimum costs of lost labour input. The “Better prevention, identification and reporting of work-related and occupational diseases and emerging risks” project was completed in 2018 and dissemination and communication of the project’s result is still going on, including plans to write a scientific article in 2021.

The PHC EG described the challenge emphasized by the pandemic of the need for more active involvement of nurses in conducting planned activities for patients with multimorbidity in older age groups and the need to increase effective interaction with social services in the face of new challenges/pandemic. The EG plans to conduct a study on the changed way of interactions between medical and social services with persons of older age groups with multimorbidity, as well as considers the possibility of creating a coordination/communication hub on the interaction between medical and social services with persons of older age groups with multimorbidity on the platform of the PHC EG. Furthermore, the EG presented the conference and policy brief “Multimorbidity and ageing in the countries of the Northern Dimension area” (document CSR 33/5).

The Secretariat invited the CSR to help with the dissemination of the results of the Expert Groups’ work.

Norway congratulated the Secretariat on the important achievement of establishing a good cross-sectorial cooperation between the Expert Groups in the last three years and invited to explore how this type of thematic collaboration could be achieved also at the CSR meetings. One proposal to try out would be devoting a sufficient time slot during a CSR meeting for in-depth thematic discussions in one particular field

The Meeting **took note** of the presented information and **thanked** the Expert Groups for their work and **agreed** to explore possibilities for in-depth thematic discussion at the next CSR meeting.

6. Development of the new NDPHS Strategy

The [Strategy Working Group Chair](#) introduced the work done so far and the timeline for the development of the Strategy.

The [Strategy Consultant](#) introduced the draft of the Strategy, by listing the structure of the document and briefly summarizing the contents of each section. She explained that the goal is to produce a fairly lean, short document that is easy to understand even to those outside the NDPHS family. Details of actions should be included in the accompanying working plan.

The [Secretariat](#) introduced the draft proposal for vision, mission and values.

[Germany](#) warned that the Partnership still needs to become better in demonstrating its added value and that the political commitment is diminishing. Germany invited the Secretariat to develop a questionnaire for the CSR on the added value and impact of the Partnership, in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the Partnership and make a better use of the strengths.

The [Secretariat](#) reminded of the [workshop](#) in Riga in November 2019, which looked into the issues mentioned by Germany and reassured that following up on the workshop is on the agenda, for example, by developing a change management plan, which is included in the EU grant application and will be done over the next three years. The questionnaire mentioned by Germany fits well into this work. As to more tangible results and making the work more practical and usable, in the new strategy an emphasis will be put on producing standard outcomes: policy briefs, policy forums, scientific events, webinars, capacity building events.

The Meeting **took note** of the presented information and **agreed** that the comments on the draft Strategy will be submitted until 1 February 2021.

7. Presentation of the work of the BEAC Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues

Mr. [Jörgen Gyllenblad](#) gave a general presentation of the work of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues, which is currently chaired by Sweden and Karelia and is focusing on four priorities: prevention and control of communicable diseases, improved health and increased access to health care in sparsely populated areas, improved environment for growth and development of children and youth, prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

[Dr. Zaza Tsereteli](#) informed about the work of the Barents Health Programme "New Technology and Methods in Health Care in sparsely populated areas" and invited the participants to the [Conference](#) "E-health technology for better health care in the Barents region" to be held on 8 December 2020 from 09:30 to 13:30 CET, and requested to further disseminate the information about the conference.

The Meeting **took note** of the presented information.

8. Next CSR meeting

The Meeting agreed that the next CSR meeting will be a virtual meeting in April 2021, exact date to be announced.

9. Closing of the meeting

The Meeting terminated on 27 November 2020 at 14:30 CET.