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Title	Information from the NDPHS Secretariat on the NDPHS progress
Submitted by	NDPHS Secretariat
Requested action	For information

1. COVID-19

All Partnership's structures continue working remotely and all meetings are held online. As vaccination coverage is gradually increasing in the NDPHS countries, there is a hope to start resuming physical or hybrid meetings (with some participants present at the meeting venue and some joining remotely) starting from this autumn. The Partnership Annual Conference at the ministerial level, to be held on 25 November 2021, is currently planned as a physical meeting, to be held in Warsaw, Poland.

Although response to COVID-19 is not in the direct mandate of the Partnership, the topic is consistently on the agenda, for example in December 2020 the NDPHS co-organized with the Northern Dimension Institute a regional event on COVID-19, the [Northern Dimension Future Forum on COVID-19](#).

2. New NDPHS Strategy

The NDPHS Strategy 2020 has been prolonged until the adoption of the new NDPHS strategy that is scheduled for autumn 2021, at the Partnership Annual Conference on 25 November 2021. All NDPHS structures are closely involved and are providing input to the new strategy. The new strategy will be discussed at the next NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives meeting scheduled on 15 June 2021. The strategy will be quite general in nature and will cover the period 2022-2027. It will be accompanied by a more detailed Activity Plan, to be updated after three years of implementation.

3. MITTENS and other projects

In November 2020 the EU approved a 1.8-million-euro NDPHS' grant application for the project **"MITTENS" (More Impact Together To Empower Northern Stakeholders)**. It consists of nine [Work Packages](#) and many activities from each of the seven NDPHS Expert Groups. The preparation of grant application was a joint effort of the NDPHS Secretariat and Expert Groups, in close consultation with the NDPHS Partner Countries. The activities started in January 2021 and will be implemented over the period of three years

The [AgeFlag project \(Roadmap to improve the health and well-being of the ageing population in the Baltic Sea Region\)](#), with its main planned outcome of establishment of a regional Task Force on Healthy and Active Ageing, is progressing well. The last national needs assessments took place in the end of 2020, a [joint needs assessment report](#) was

produced and a [policy lab](#) took place in February 2021 to identify ageing-related topics that are best addressed through international cooperation, which are the following: creation of age-friendly environments, increased positive public attitude, increased social inclusion and improved competences. At the moment the process of forming the Task Force is on-going.

The NDPHS Non-Communicable Diseases Expert Group has organized three regional workshops on progress and analysis of main causes of premature deaths in the Northern Dimension countries. The three workshops each focused on a different group of countries, namely, the [Nordic Countries and Germany](#), the [Baltic Countries and Poland](#) and [Russia and Belarus](#). The activity was implemented under the EU-funded Framework Contract for the project “Providing support to the implementation of the NDPHS Strategy”.

4. Upcoming events

- NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives, 15 June 2021,
- Partnership Annual Conference (PAC) at the ministerial level, 25 November 2021,
- PAC side-event, exact date and modalities to be announced. The focus of the event will be on healthy and active ageing, speaker and theme suggestions are very welcome.