



**Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR)  
Thirty-fourth Meeting  
15 June 2021  
Online**

<b>Title</b>	Minutes from the 34 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat
<b>Summary / Note</b>	This document outlines the main discussion points and decisions made during the 34 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the CSR. The <a href="#">list of participants</a> 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. Agenda item 7 was chaired by Mr. Niclas Jacobson, the NDPHS CSR co-Chair.

Ms. Ülla-Karin Nurm, the Director of the NDPHS Secretariat, welcomed the participants.

The participants introduced themselves.

### 2. Adoption of the agenda.

The Meeting **adopted** the agenda as submitted in document CSR 34/2.

### 3. Information by the NDPHS Secretariat.

The Secretariat informed about the present state of the MITTENS and “PA Health Support 3” projects, both of which are progressing well and without any issues or problems. In the “Art of Staying Healthy,” a joint project with the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture within the MITTENS, an [open call](#) has been published for projects that develop and pilot methodologies for better cooperation between the health and cultural sector. Applications can be sent until 19 July and CSR and EG members are invited to disseminate the information within their networks.

Furthermore, the Secretariat informed about the successful [meeting](#) of the Prison Health Expert Group co-organized by the Secretariat and WHO Europe on 18 February 2021 during the temporary absence of the leadership of the group.

Finally, the Secretariat informed about the EU’s request to establish an EUSBSR Steering Group and that the Secretariat is in the process of exploring what kinds of mechanisms would be acceptable to all NDPHS Partner Countries. One possible idea is the establishment of an *ad hoc* working group within the NDPHS network, reporting to the CSR, that would develop the dialogue of national and regional strategies and could include elements of coordination of the EUSBSR Policy Area “Health”. The Secretariat will draft the Terms of Reference of such group and will submit to the Partner Countries for consultation.

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

#### 4. Updates by Partners.

Intervention by the [Russian Federation](#) is available on the [NDPHS website](#).

[WHO Europe](#) informed about the progress of the implementation of the European Programme of Work 2020-2025 adopted in September 2020 and that some of the items on the agenda of the upcoming Regional Committee in September 2021 might be of particular interest to the NDPHS - drawing lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, rethinking health- and social-care systems in the post-COVID era, and launch of the Mental Health Coalition, among others. WHO Europe further presented an update on the work of the Monti Commission (the Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development to rethink policy priorities in light of COVID-19 pandemics), as well as the [SAFER report](#) launched by the WHO NCD Office in Moscow and the [Childhood Obesity report](#) recently published by the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative.

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

#### 5. Preparations for the PAC 15 and side-event

The [Chair](#) informed that the 15<sup>th</sup> Partnership Annual Conference (PAC 15) will take place on 25 November 2021 and is planned as a physical meeting in Warsaw, with a ministerial dinner on 24 November 2021. Should the epidemiological situation be unstable, the event will be held online.

The [Secretariat](#) informed that the PAC side-event will focus on healthy and active ageing and is planned on 23 November as a hybrid event that will be broadcasted. The event will address the four knowledge arenas identified in the AgeFlag project: active and healthy ageing, integrated care, life-long learning and labour participation. The topics will be discussed by panelists; video interviews of older people and high-level policy makers are also planned. The outcome of the event will be a manifesto, to be submitted to PAC for adoption. All CSR and EG members are invited to share their ideas and proposals with the Secretariat at their earliest convenience while the event concept is still under development.

[Russia](#) suggested that a simultaneous interpretation into Russian language shall be provided.

The Meeting **took note** of the presented information and **requested** the Secretariat to proceed with the organization of the PAC and PAC side-event as presented.

#### 6. Information exchange between the Expert Groups and CSR

In this agenda item the Expert Groups and the Secretariat delivered short “elevator pitch” presentations describing the successes of 2020, ambitions for 2021 and call for action to other NDPHS actors, followed by comments and reflections from the pre-assigned panels of CSR and Expert Group members. The presentations are available on the [NDPHS website](#) and below is a brief summary of the presentations.

The [AMR EG](#) reported that the work of the EG was seriously impacted in 2020 as most of the experts were directly involved in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ambition for 2021 is to carry out a 2nd cancelled workshop in the project “Considering resistance data to inform guidelines” financed by the German government and to plan a mapping according to the WP 8 in the MITTENS project. The AMR EG invites the CSR members to act to highlight the shortage of human resources with dedicated time to implement the WHO’s surveillance systems for antimicrobial resistance and

antimicrobial use and consumption. During the discussion the AMR EG and the HIV, TB & AI EG agreed that there is a lot of potential for cooperation between the two groups.

The HIV, TB & AI EG informed that the greatest success of 2020 was the organization of a 2-day Zoom-[conference](#) in December 2020 on Covid-19 implications for HIV and TB services in the Baltic Sea Region. The conference received strong support from the EG members and enjoyed a wide involvement of external actors and experts, smooth partnership of co-organizers. The online format of the conference has helped to establish new contacts and attract attendees who would have not attended a face-to-face event. The ambition for 2021 is to start the implementation of the WP 3 in the MITTENS project and ensure that all ND countries are represented in the EG.

The NCD EG mentioned that among the successes of 2020 was joining of Estonia as a member of the Expert Group and successful implementation of two initiatives: the “Healthy Boost – Urban Labs for Better Health for All in the Baltic Sea Region - boosting cross-sectoral cooperation for health and wellbeing in the cities” project, as well as the “PYLL-2-Study renewed for evaluation of trends in death rates from major causes in NDPHS Partner Countries,” which included three online events, focusing on the [Nordic Countries and Germany](#), [Baltic Countries and Poland](#), and [Russia and Belarus](#). In 2021 the EG will focus on implementation of the health literacy project within the WP 2 of the MITTENS project, as well as would like to take part in “The Art of Staying Healthy” project. Finland stressed the importance of continuously keeping healthy lifestyles as a priority on the political agendas.

The OSH EG in 2020 had succeeded in creating an ambitious MITTENS project plan about updating the core competency of OSH professionals in the changing world of work and in 2021 the project will officially start after the project coordinator will be nominated in summer. During this year the EG will finalize gathering the baseline data on education and training of OSH professionals in the Partner Countries and organize the first workshop. Several participants mentioned that online work and online meetings present risk factors that have not been known and studied before and OSH EG replied that these aspects will be taken into account into its work. During the discussion the OSH EG and the PHC EG agreed to cooperate more closely between the two groups and to invite each other’s representatives to their respective meetings.

The PHC EG mentioned among its biggest successes an [event](#) and a [policy brief](#) on multi-morbidity and ageing in the Northern Dimension. The PHC EG in particular stressed the importance of using national languages for reaching the target groups. In 2021 priority will be given to the WP 6 of the MITTENS project. The PHC EG expressed hope that CSR members will facilitate the use of EG work to inform decision makers in their respective countries, for instance, assistance in distribution of policy briefs and other documents to stakeholders in English and in national languages.

The ASA EG in 2020 succeeded in applying for three project proposals within the MITTENS (Novel Nicotine and Tobacco Products, Cannabis, Municipality Network). The ambition for 2021 is to launch the Network of the Municipalities focused on preventing work to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs and to increase cooperation with the NGOs, such as Movendi International and NordAN. As for the call for action, the EG would like to see the CSR members actively distributing and promoting information about the municipality network and the NDPHS EGs closely collaborating while discussing the activities to be implemented under the NDPHS new strategy.

Regarding the PH EG, the Secretariat mentioned that the EG is continuing its work despite the current lack of the leadership and that in the interim period the Secretariat functions as an intermediate chair and ITA, with strong and highly valued support by the WHO. The Secretariat invited all Partners to consider leadership of the PH EG. Russia informed that it will continue to be an active member of the Expert Group, but is not in a position to assume the Lead Partner role. WHO Europe informed that the WHO NCD Office in Moscow is available and willing to co-chair the PH EG, but would not be in a position to assume the chairmanship.

The Secretariat presented the progress of the AgeFlag project and informed about the national needs assessments held in Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Russia, the Joint regional needs assessment drafted and published on the [AgeFlag website](#) and a [Policy Lab](#) held on 4-5 February 2021. The ambition for 2021 is the establishment of an NDPHS Task Force on Active and Healthy Ageing, finalisation of the Roadmap to improve the health and wellbeing of the ageing population in the Baltic Sea Region and organization of a PAC side-event on ageing. It would be much appreciated if the CSR members could assist with the dissemination of the AgeFlag outputs through national channels and actively participate in and promote the PAC side-event.

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

## 7. Development of the new NDPHS Strategy

The Secretariat presented the current status of the development of the new NDPHS Strategy, including the structure of the document, drafts of the vision, mission and values, and presented the timeline for next steps: the draft strategy would be disseminated to the CSR members and EG Chairs and ITAs for comments until 10 September and the strategy would be adopted at the ministerial-level PAC on 25 November.

Latvia suggested rephrasing the mission as follows: “The NDPHS works together with the people (...) for the benefit of the wider public – in an effort to help improve human health and social wellbeing in the Northern Dimension area.”

The Meeting **took note** of the provided information and **agreed** to proceed in accordance with the timeline presented by the Secretariat.

## 8. Closing of the meeting

The Meeting terminated on 15 June 2021 at 14:15 CEST.