

The NDPHS holds a ministerial-level conference

Agreement on the Establishment of the NDPHS Secretariat signed; NDPHS Action Statement on NCDs approved

The Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being held its eighth Annual Conference (PAC) on 25 November 2011 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Ms Tatyana A. Golikova, the Minister of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation, hosted and chaired the Conference. Ministers responsible for health and other high representatives of Partners took part in the event. The PAC held a discussion on a wide spectrum of issues related to public health and social well-being in the Northern Dimension area, with the focus on the importance of raising the profile of health and social well-being on the regional agenda as well as the regional cooperation on non-communicable disease prevention and control as the main themes of the conference (read the **Conclusions by the Chair**).¹

An important step forward has been taken by the Partnership with the **Agreement on the Establishment of the Secretariat of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being** having been signed during the meeting. It is expected that the NDPHS Secretariat will officially begin its operations in spring 2012.

The PAC reviewed the status of health and social well-being on the regional agenda. While appreciating the importance attached to the social welfare and health within the Northern Dimension Policy context, the PAC agreed these two need to be more widely recognised as being of fundamental importance for the future of our societies. In particular, it is crucial that health and social well-being be visibly exposed among the funding priorities in the European programmes that will be implemented in the Northern Dimension area during the coming period. At the same time, it is necessary to align these programmes with the set priorities and targets. Having in mind the above, the PAC adopted a **NDPHS position paper** aimed to raise the profile of health and social well-being.²

A regional event, "Healthy lifestyle – the cornerstone of public health", was also organised by the NDPHS the day before the Partnership Annual Conference. The PAC shared the participants' view that non-communicable diseases (NCD) constitute a major burden and challenge judged by the amount of preventable premature mortality and morbidity threatening economic and human development. In light of this, the PAC approved the **NDPHS Action Statement for Implementation of the European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in the Northern Dimension Partnership area in 2012-2016**.³ The Action Statement aims to help translate respective global and European policies into actions in the Northern Dimension area and calls for

¹ Available at http://www.ndphs.org/?doc,PAC_8_Conclusions_by_the_Chair.pdf.

² Available at [www.ndphs.org/?doc,Post-2013_European-Programmes--Raising_Profile_of_Health_and_Social_Well-being_\(NDPHS_position_paper\).pdf](http://www.ndphs.org/?doc,Post-2013_European-Programmes--Raising_Profile_of_Health_and_Social_Well-being_(NDPHS_position_paper).pdf).

³ Available at http://www.ndphs.org/?doc,NDPHS_Action_Statement_implementation_of_European_Strategy_for_Prevention_and_Control_of_Noncommunicable_Diseases_in_ND-area_2012-2016.pdf.

strengthened action focusing on individuals to change their lifestyle regarding use of alcohol and tobacco products, diet and physical activity towards healthier behaviour.

The Conference also reviewed the progress of the Partnership and approved the **NDPHS Progress Report for 2011**.⁴ The Partnership continued running a wide array of concrete and pragmatic activities including, but not limited to, discharging its role as Lead Partner for the health component of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Action Plan, policy development and dialogue, exchange of expertise and information, project development and implementation, information production and dissemination, out-reach and engagement of external actors in regional cooperation for health and social well-being, and advocating a higher profile of health and social well-being on the regional cooperation agenda. The PAC stressed the need to have a range of pragmatic projects implemented with the Partnership's facilitation, which would address regional challenges and have measurable impact.

Further, the PAC discussed the future direction of the Partnership and its development. It revised the goals and operational targets of the NDPHS Strategy and adopted the **NDPHS Work Plan for 2012**.⁵

Finally, the PAC thanked the Russian Federation for chairing the Partnership over the past two years and elected Finland as the Partnership Chair and Germany as the Co-Chair for the next two-year period.

View our website at www.ndphs.org and keep an eye on policy developments and explore the world of the NDPHS – a partnership committed to achieving tangible results!

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⁴ Available at www.ndphs.org/?doc,NDPHS_Progress_report_for_2011.pdf.

⁵ Available at www.ndphs.org/?doc,NDPHS_Work_Plan_for_2012.pdf.