

Recommendations to Strengthen WHO EURO Member State Collaboration on Improving Access to Medicines

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Oral Contribution: Provisional agenda item 5(d) Strengthening Member State collaboration on improving access to medicines in the WHO European Region EUR/RC67/11 + EUR/RC67/Conf.Doc./9

Mr/Ms Chairperson,

Health Action International (HAI) and endorsing organisations welcome the opportunity to address this meeting. We acknowledge the working document, [Strengthening Member State Collaboration on Improving Access to Medicines in the WHO European Region](#). Efforts to ensure universal access to medicines, including controlled medicines, is an increasingly pressing matter for Member States; therefore, the document is a valuable discussion tool to aid ongoing deliberations at the WHO and elsewhere.

Outputs from a variety of institutions, such as the United Nations Secretary General's [High-Level Panel on Access to Medicines](#), the World Health Organization's [fair pricing forum](#), or the [OECD's sustainable access to innovative therapies initiative](#) constitute solid evidence of the growing support for a needs-driven R&D model, as well as greater transparency in R&D costs, pricing and procurement procedures. Cooperation exercises, such as the [Valetta Declaration](#), or the Beneluxa joint price negotiations, are further examples of country-led processes that WHO EURO should support.

We positively note the 'values-based'^[1] approach endorsed by the document and the strategic areas laid out for Member State collaboration. We recommend, however, the inclusion of intellectual property management tools, particularly TRIPS flexibilities, such as voluntary and compulsory licences, which would enable Member States to improve access to medicines and other health technologies and, as such, be part of the technical cooperation provided by WHO EURO.

Health technology assessment (HTA) is fundamental for assisting national authorities in determining the added therapeutic value of new pharmaceutical products. It is crucial that HTA bodies, as well regulatory agencies, base their evaluations on robust evidentiary standards; it is also essential that all clinical trial data is publicly disclosed. We call upon WHO EURO to promote region-wide capacity building on HTA with the aim of correcting existing knowledge and expertise imbalances between Member States.

Finally, we wish to clearly state our commitment to the dialogue and engagement with all

stakeholders; we reject and will oppose all attempts to curtail the legitimate voice of civil society organisations, be it at national or regional levels.

[1] “ *These values include fairness, sustainability, quality, transparency, accountability, gender equality, dignity and the right to participate in decision-making*”. [Health 2020: A European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being](#). World Health Organization (WHO) Regional European Office, Copenhagen, 2013. Pp. 2 Available at http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/199536/Health2020-Short.pdf?ua=1

***Delivered by:**

[Health Action International](#) - HAI is a non-governmental organisation entirely dedicated to strengthening medicines policy to improve public health. We want all people to receive the right medicine, in the right dose, for the right amount of time, at a price they can afford.

***Endorsed by:**

[European Public Health Alliance](#) - EPHA's vision is a Europe with universal good health and well-being, where all have access to a sustainable and high quality health system: A Europe whose policies and practices contribute to health, both within and beyond its borders.

[Medicus Mundi International](#) - MMI's Network Health for All is a network of organisations working in the field of international health cooperation and global health.

Studiorum - Studiorum is a research think tank working on health and well-being policies in south-eastern Europe.

[International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care](#) - IAHP's vision is universal access to high-quality palliative care, integrated into all levels of healthcare systems in a continuum of care with disease prevention, early diagnosis and treatment, to assure that any patient's or family caregiver's suffering is relieved to the greatest extent possible.

[International Federation of Medical Students Associations](#) - IFMSA is a student-run organisation that represents, connects and engages every day with an inspiring and engaging network of 1.3 million medical students from 136 national member organisations in 127 countries around the globe.