



ANNUAL MEETING

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Instituto Nacional de Saúde
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Session 1. The new and emerging challenges in Europe

The first session of the IANPHI Europe Network aimed at setting the scene for discussions by providing a glance at *the new and emerging challenges in Europe* before diving into more specific themes. The session was moderated by Dr. Markku Tervahauta, Director General of the [Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare \(THL\)](#).

Keynote: The broad spectrum of challenges facing by Europe Region members

By Dr. Joao Breda, Head of the Athens Quality of Care Office, [WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

Climate and energy crises, socioeconomic turbulences, conflict and displaced population, inequalities, communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health, distrust in science and misinformation, and finally health workforce burn-out appear as the main public health challenges for the upcoming years. In this sense, the [WHO European Work Program 2020-2025](#) seeks to bring European actors together. Developed before the COVID-19 pandemic, it aimed at leaving no one behind and strengthening the role of National Health Authorities, while foreseeing some of the challenges. The consisting flagship initiatives of this program are as follows: the Pan-European Mental Health Coalition, the European Immunization Agenda 2030, Empowerment through Digital Health, and Healthier Behaviors by Incorporating Behavioral and Cultural Insights.

Even though universal coverage is a high agenda priority for almost all countries, quality of care did not receive the required attention. Therefore, the WHO Office on Quality of Care and Patient Safety was established in April 2021 in Greece to carry these ideas of timely, equitable, integrated, safe, effective and person-centered care. The recent [Bucharest Declaration on the Health and Care Workforce](#) reminds that smarter investment in workforce education, development and protection are of crucial importance. Dr. J. Breda also mentioned the [2022 Report on Mental Health](#) focusing on young people and the pocket book on [Primary health care for children and adolescents](#). Efforts have been devoted to addressing digital health issues and harnessing the power of digital transformation without creating new inequalities.

Presentation of the main challenges faced by the Norwegian Public Health Institute

By Dr. Camilla Stoltenberg, Director-General, [Norwegian Institute of Public Health \(FHI\)](#)

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health is dealing with the same challenges faced by National Public Health Institutes (NPHIs) elsewhere in Europe. The COVID-19 crisis continues to weigh on the healthcare system, which is also affected by the conflict in Ukraine, by climate change and by the inequalities that these events contribute to intensify. The immediate threat is the increased economic and political instability as well as the surrounding unpredictability. However, the current context could be an opportunity as it exposes the need for a stronger public health as part of the health system. A complex system and broad general approach need to be developed through implementing models to be operational on the ground. It means seizing the potential of ongoing political processes, in which public health could and should play a part, as well as getting multi-objective and cross-sectoral investment

in public health. In times to come, NPHIs cannot skip networking and working as collaborative organizations to mobilize people with investment and political linked-benefits.

Presentation of the main challenges faced by the Public Health Institute of Montenegro

By Dr. Igor Galić, Director, Institute of Public Health of Montenegro (IJZCG)

The Institute of Public Health of Montenegro's main public health challenges are preparedness for future infectious disease pandemics, prevention of infectious diseases by immunization, chronic NCDs, data collection, mortality statistics, and threats of vector-borne diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the fracture of society, families and people. This event required greater cross regional and cross-institutes collaboration, for instance with the French Pasteur Institute, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the German Robert Koch Institute (RKI). It gave rise to the Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC) currently under construction by the Institute of Public Health of Montenegro. The issue of data collection is particularly accurate in Montenegro since 25% of deaths recorded in the country are from unknown causes. To meet the need for reliable and high-quality information, *Dr. I. Galić* believes in digitalization. He emphasized the role of a "One Health" approach and new technologies as part of the answer to new challenges.

Round table discussion with all participants and Q&A Session

Discussion pointed out difficulties in working on foresight and planning when institutes are confronted to daily challenges and crisis. The collaboration at the European level is seen as key to facilitate exchanges and mutual support, as well as helping to catch up with resource differences between countries.

Participants put an emphasis on workforce health and wellbeing, especially for young professionals. However, budget cuts could have an impact on the recruitment of qualified staff. The development of a systematic approach is needed when considering workload and funding in the public sector.

Some questions raised the issue of decision-making during public health emergency and periods of uncertainty, when there is a lack of data or evidence. In this sense, setting-up well-regulated data collecting systems is considered as critical and investments to be directed towards systems that would be functional during both day-to-day life and crisis times.

Written by Tristan Lardet, IANPHI Secretariat