



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

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March 2015

Unedited – English only

## **Governance Reform in the WHO European Region**

### ***Summary of initiatives undertaken 2010 – 2015***

The European Region has been proactive in governance reform, starting in February 2010 with the establishment of the Working Group on Governance of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee (SCRC). This document collects the main initiatives and changes grouped under six categories:

- Procedures for nomination of the Regional Director;
- Strengthened governance oversight by Member States;
- Management of governing body agendas;
- Management of resolutions and amendments;
- Transparency and criteria for nomination of members of the Board and the SCRC;
- Miscellaneous

## Introduction

The European Region has been proactive in governance reform, starting in February 2010 with the establishment of the Working Group on Governance of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee (SCRC).

A summary of governance issues addressed by the SCRC and the RC over the last 5 years is provided in the following. Numerous issues have been studied by the SCRC and its successive working groups, but for ease of reference they have been grouped under the following 6 main topics:

- Procedures for nomination of the Regional Director;
- Strengthened governance oversight by Member States;
- Management of governing body agendas;
- Management of resolutions and amendments;
- Transparency and criteria for nomination of members of the Board and the SCRC;
- Miscellaneous.

Hyperlinks to the relevant Regional Committee and SCRC documents, and RC resolutions, have been provided in the [Annex](#) in order to provide full documentation in support of the present summary.

## Procedures for nomination of the Regional Director

Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee describes in detail the provisions for the nomination of the Regional Director for the European Region. The basic provisions were introduced already in 1994, but extensive amendments have been introduced as a result of reviews undertaken by the SCRC and its sub-groups in 2010 and 2013, with further modifications being proposed by the present SCRC governance sub-group, to be presented to RC65 in September 2015.

Initially, Rule 47 prescribed the setting up a Search Group to identify potential candidates for Regional Director. However, the 2010 SCRC governance sub-group acknowledged the fact that, since Member States are free to both nominate and elect whomever they want as Regional Director, there was little added value in having a group appointed by the Regional Committee to actively search for candidates. A more useful function of this group would be to evaluate the merits or otherwise of the various candidatures based on clear criteria, with the purpose of coming up with a short-list of candidates for the Regional Committee's consideration.

Rule 47, in its present form (including amendments currently proposed by the SCRC sub-group to RC65), consequently includes the following provisions:

- Appointment by the RC of a Regional Evaluation Group, composed of 6 Member States and with a quorum of 4, based on equitable geographical representation;
- All Member States proposing a candidate for Regional Director are reminded of the Code of Conduct for nomination of RD, adopted by RC63 (and harmonized with the revised modus operandi for the process of electing the Director-General);

- The Regional Evaluation Group makes arrangements for all candidates to give a time-limited, oral presentation at a meeting to which all Member States of the Region are invited. In the interest of due process and transparency, this arrangement applies in all cases, even when there is only one candidate.<sup>1</sup>
- All candidates are invited to undergo a medical examination, and to have a completed WHO medical examination form brought to the attention of the Director, Health and Medical Services at headquarters, in order to ensure that they enjoy the good physical condition required of all staff members of the Organization;
- Following analysis, reviews and discussions of the CVs and impressions from the oral presentations, the Regional Evaluation Group prepares individual evaluation reports of all candidates. It concludes its work by also preparing an un-ranked short-list of not more than 5 candidates, who in its opinion most closely meet the criteria laid down for the post of Regional Director. Individual evaluation reports and the short-list are sent under confidential cover to the officers of the RC, the Director-General, and to each Member State of the Region;
- The final step in the process is the actual nomination of the Regional Director, which takes place at a private meeting of the Regional Committee, through secret ballot.

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<sup>1</sup> In order to give all Member States an equal opportunity to attend such a meeting, it will normally be convened jointly with the Standing Committee during the latter's session immediately prior to the opening of the World Health Assembly.

## **Strengthened governance oversight by Member States**

In accordance with Article 50 (b) of the WHO Constitution, a key governance function of the Regional Committee is *'to supervise the activities of the regional office'*. In view of this, the RC has over the last few years been refocused towards a more strategic involvement in regional and global policy debates. At the same time, the RC has also devolved some oversight functions to the SCRC.

As from 2010, the following measures have been introduced:

- A strengthened oversight function of the Standing Committee was put in place in 2010 through Resolution EUR/RC60/R3, in line with its basic function *'to act for and represent the Regional Committee and to ensure that effect is given to the decisions and policies of the Regional Committee'*.<sup>2</sup>
- In this regard, it is important to recall that the functions of the Standing Committee, as laid out in Rule 14.2.10, subsections (a) to (g), is closely modelled on Article 28 of the WHO Constitution, which sets out the functions of the Executive Board vis-à-vis the World Health Assembly. The European Region consequently has a formal two-tier governance structure of Member States, - a set-up which might be of interest also to other regions of the Organization;
- As part of strengthened oversight and accountability, the SCRC receives and discusses high-level management reports on key strategic issues, linked to the performance of the Regional Office (as from 2010);
- In order to gradually involve all European Member States in the governance and oversight function of the Organization, while at the same time facilitating a better geographical balance, the membership of the SCRC was in 2010 increased from 9 to 12, with 4 outgoing and 4 new members selected each year for periods of 3 years.

## **Management of governing body agendas**

The question of how to better manage the agendas of the global governing bodies, including the issue of how to limit the number of agenda items, has been a recurring theme at recent Executive Board sessions.

In the European Region, a different but related issue was identified by the 2010 SCRC sub-group on Governance, i.e. the fact that the combination of shortened Regional Committee sessions and the large number of agenda items predetermined by previous sessions of the Assembly and the Board, did not leave sufficient room for debate on important regional priorities.

In order to ensure a more strategic approach to the management of Regional Committee agendas, including the control of the number of items to be tabled, the following measures have therefore been introduced:

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<sup>2</sup> Rule 14.2.10 (a) of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee

- Regional Committee agendas have been reoriented to focus more on high-level policy and strategy issues of direct relevance to ministers of health (2010);
- Inclusion in the RC agendas of ministerial panel discussions on key policy issues, in order to mobilize European support for global action, whenever called for by WHA/EB resolutions (2010);
- For the first two days of the RC session, ministerial lunches are also arranged. These typically include presentations and discussions of selected high-level issues not requiring resolutions, thus contributing to also easing the work pressure on the regular RC agenda;
- Introduction of a 'rolling agenda' for RC sessions with a multi-year focus, in order to give delegates a better strategic overview of when agenda items will be tabled (2011);
- Use of annotated agendas that provide information on the planned conduct of the discussions in the Regional Committee (2011).

### **Management of resolutions and amendments**

Several initiatives have been taken in the European Region over the last 5 years to better manage the submission and amendments of RC resolutions. In this work the SCRC and its sub-groups have tried to balance, on the one hand the sovereign right of Member States to advance their priorities through draft resolutions with, on the other, the potential for overcrowding the RC's agenda and the disruption which late proposals may create.

As of 2015, the following ground-rules apply for the management of resolutions in the European Region:

- In order to support Member States, and in the interest of transparency, individual SCRC members are designated as focal points for specific technical RC agenda items and resolutions (Resolution EUR/RC63/R7);
- All draft resolutions for the Regional Committee should in principle be reviewed by the SCRC, and should be ready for the open meeting of the SCRC in May for consideration by all European Member States (2011);
- New rules were introduced in 2013 regarding minimum time limits for the tabling of draft resolutions and substantive amendments, as follows (with similar procedures later adopted globally by EB134 in January 2014) :
  - Draft resolutions and/or decisions by Member States must be introduced in writing at least 7 days prior to the opening of the RC session;

- Substantive amendments to such proposals must normally be introduced in writing not later than the closure of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the session;
  - Draft proposals by the Secretariat relating to items on the agenda must be sent to Member States at least 6 weeks prior to the opening of the session;
  - Substantive amendments to such Secretariat proposals should normally be introduced in writing 24 hours before the opening of the session.
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- Annual reviews have been instituted of past resolutions to identify their expected life span and their potential for being 'sun-setted'. A table summarizing all existing and active resolutions is being updated annually after each RC, and made available through a web portal. As such, Member States contemplating the circulation of new resolutions, can take guidance on whether or not such new proposals would overlap or duplicate already existing work (2013);
  
  - In 2014, the SCRC sub-group on Governance also recommended new templates for future RC resolutions. While a template for the financial and administrative implications of resolutions was routinely used at sessions of the Board and the Assembly, and had also been used at sessions of the RC, the sub-group felt more clarity was required concerning how new resolutions linked up with the General Programme of Work, the Programme Budget, the Health 2020 strategy and previous resolutions of the EB, WHA and the RC

[Template for draft Regional Committee resolution](#)

[Template Financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of the draft Regional Committee resolution on \(subject of resolution\)](#)

### **Transparency and criteria for nomination of members of the Board and the SCRC**

A key element of governance reform in the European Region over the last 5 years has been how to devise a transparent and democratic system for nominating the 8 European Members to serve on the Executive Board and the 12 members of the SCRC from amongst the Region's 53 Member States.

That thorny issue has been on the agenda of successive governance sub-groups of the SCRC from 2010 to the present, and has only recently been finally settled through a consensus decision of the SCRC.

The following elements make up the pillars in the new nomination process:

- Three sub-regional groupings of countries among the European Region's 53 Member States were adopted through Resolution EUR/RC60/R3 and reconfirmed through Resolution EUR/RC63/R7;

- The same resolutions also stipulated specific criteria for experience and areas of competence which all candidates to the EB and the SCRC should fulfill;
- The approved criteria have subsequently been broken down by the SCRC sub-group on Governance into a number of clearly identifiable sub-criteria, against which the CVs of potential candidates can be screened and weighted;
- Two additional criteria have been added, namely the number of years since the country was last represented on the Board or the SCRC, and a 'country statement of intent' through which candidates would outline the aspirations and objectives linked to a potential EB or SCRC membership;
- A ranking system with weights assigned to the various criteria and sub-criteria in order of importance has been agreed to, following which individual serving SCRC members will assign scores according to their own judgment of the candidates;
- The final results are compiled through a mathematical algorithm, taking all the above parameters into account. As such the nomination tool fully respects each SCRC member's individual assessment and prioritization. It is furthermore fair to all candidates, objective, transparent and explainable to unsuccessful candidates;
- While future nominations to the Board and the SCRC would not be based purely on mathematically calculated scores, the tool will be used as an active guide to the SCRC, in order to take objective, informed nomination decisions.

## **Miscellaneous**

In addition to the above broad categories of governance reform, the European Region has also taken a number of initiatives in other areas, in order to ease the burden on Member States and facilitate their active participation in the work of the Organization, as follows:

### For global governing bodies:

- Extensive, advance briefing documents prepared for European Member States covering all items listed on the agendas of the global governing bodies. as well as information meetings/briefings also organized prior to, as well as daily, during meetings of the Board and the Assembly to help with the global and regional interface;

### For the Regional Committee:

- Live webcasting of the entire RC proceedings, since 2010, as a means of promoting transparency and understanding of the Organization's work;

- Webcasting also of pre-session briefings for RCs, with the option of sending advance, written questions to the Secretariat;
- English/Russian parallel projection of slides at RC sessions since 2012, whenever power point presentations are used;
- Also since 2012, posting of NGO statements and related video messages on EURO's website prior to the opening of the RC;
- Advance publication of working documents for RC sessions in English, one month prior to the official dispatch time, - since 2012. (With a disclaimer that further corrections and amendments may still occur, up until the official date of dispatch.)

For the SCRC

- Extensive use of teleconferences between sessions of the SCRC;
- Electronic clearance and adoption of SCRC reports shortly after the closure of meetings, thus ensuring early access to these reports also by non-SCRC Member States.



## Annex

List of reference material available for more details on the above summary:

- EUR/RC60/11 Governance of the WHO Regional Office for Europe

Link to a pdf

[EUR/RC60/11 Governance of the WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[EUR/RC60/11 Governance of the WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

- Resolution EUR/RC60/R3

Link to a pdf

[EUR/RC60/R3 Resolution Governance of the WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[EUR/RC60/R3 Resolution Governance of the WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

- EUR/RC62/14 WHO Reform

Link to a pdf [EUR/RC62/14 WHO Reform](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[EUR/RC62/14 WHO Reform](#)

- EUR/RC63/15 WHO Reform: progress and implications for Europe

Link to a pdf

[EUR/RC63/15 WHO Reform: progress and implications for Europe](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[EUR/RC63/15 WHO Reform: progress and implications for Europe](#)

- EUR/RC63/16 Rev.1 Governance reform in the European Region

Link to a pdf

[EUR/RC63/16 Rev.1 Governance reform in the WHO European Region](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[EUR/RC63/16 Rev.1 Governance reform in the WHO European Region](#)

- Resolution EUR/RC63/R7

Link to a pdf

[EUR/RC63/R7 Resolution Governance of the WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[EUR/RC63/R7 Resolution Governance of the WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

- EUR/RC64/16 WHO Reform: progress and implications for the European Region  
Link to a pdf

[EUR/RC64/16 WHO Reform: progress and implications for the European Region](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[EUR/RC64/16 WHO Reform: progress and implications for the European Region](#)

- EUR/SC21/SG Governance Subgroup on governance of the 21st SCRC – final report

Link to a pdf

[EUR/SC21/SG Governance Subgroup on governance of the 21st SCRC – final report](#)

Link to versions in English, French, and Russian

[EUR/SC21/SG Governance Subgroup on governance of the 21st SCRC – final report](#)

- [Template for draft Regional Committee resolution](#)
- [Template Financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of the draft Regional Committee resolution on \(subject of resolution\)](#)

- Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe and of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe

Link to a pdf

[Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe and of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe](#)

Link to versions in English, French, German, and Russian

[Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe and of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe](#)



## Regional Committee for Europe

Sixty- fourth session

Copenhagen, 15–18 September 2014

Provisional agenda item X(x)

EUR/RC64/X Add.x

12xxxx

xx Month 2014

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

# Template for draft Regional Committee resolution

## 1. Resolution title

## 2. Preambular paragraphs should be limited and clarify:

### Noting/Recalling:

- link with the 12GPW and global strategies or resolutions
- link with the Health 2020 strategy
- link with existing WHA/EB/RC resolution
- clarify if this resolution replaces existing resolutions
- (Should be brief and focussed)

## 3. Operational paragraphs can have two sections:

### Request/Urges Member States

- short and feasible description of the commitments of Member States

### Request Regional Director

- short and feasible description of the commitments of the Regional Office  
( the costing for these requests, both for activities and staff, need to be reflected in the annex to the resolution)

## 4. Other Operational Aspects

- include the expected life-span , specific reporting requirements and eventual sun setting of previous resolutions
- **NOTE:** if funding can not be identified in the current PB, include a request to the RD to include adequate provisions for the next biennium and request the RD to report to the SCRC if this proves not to be possible.

**Regional Committee for Europe**

Sixty- fourth session

**Copenhagen, 15–18 September 2014**

Provisional agenda item X(x)

EUR/RC64/X Add.x

12xxxx

xx Month 2014

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## **Financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of the draft Regional Committee resolution on (subject of resolution)**

**1. Resolution:**

**2. Linkage to the current Programme budget**

**Will this resolution directly contribute to the outcome(s) and output(s) set out in the current PB. If so please specify:**

Category:	Outcome
Programme area(s):	Output

**Describe the nature and extend of this contribution, including whether there will be an impact on other parts of the same output.**

**3. Estimated cost and staffing implications in relation to the Programme budget**

**(a) Total cost**

**Indicate (i) the lifespan of the resolution during which the Secretariat's activities would be required for implementation and (ii) the cost of those activities (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000).**

(i)        years (covering the period        )

(ii) Total: US\$        (staff: US\$        ; activities: US\$        )

**(b) Cost for the current biennium**

**Indicate how much of the cost indicated in 3(a) is for the current biennium (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000).**

Total: US\$        (staff: US\$        ; activities: US\$        )

**Is the estimated cost fully included within the current approved Programme budget? (Yes/no)**

**If "no", indicate how much is not included.**

US\$

**(c) Cost for future biennia**

**Estimated cost per future biennia**

20XX-XX : Total . US\$

20YY-YY: Total US\$

**(d) Staffing implications**

**Could the resolution be implemented by existing staff? (Yes/no)**

**If “no” indicate how many additional staff – full-time equivalents.**

**4. Funding**

**Is the estimated cost for the current biennium indicated in 3 (b) fully funded? (Yes/no)**

**If “no”, indicate the funding gap and how the funds would be mobilized (provide details of expected source(s) of funds).**

US\$ ; source(s) of funds:

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