



European Union

Statement

WHO

77th World Health Assembly

(27 May – 1 June 2024)

**Item 14.1 - WHO's work in health emergencies (Consolidated report by the
Director-General)**

Geneva, 30 May 2024

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EU Statement

Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova* and Georgia as well as the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States remain concerned about the alarming rise of health emergencies and natural disasters due to climate change, environmental factors, conflicts and increased human-animal interaction, noting the devastating consequences of crises on the health and wellbeing of people. We applaud the work of WHO and the tireless efforts of its staff in addressing the numerous health emergencies across the world, from Afghanistan to Haiti, Somalia, Sudan,

* North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Ukraine, the occupied Palestinian territory, and others, often in unsafe and hostile settings. The One Health approach, recognizing the interconnectedness between human, animal and environmental health, is crucial to effectively address these complex emergencies.

Overall, we remain concerned about the impact of both sudden onset and protracted crises on women and girls, persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations. We are especially worried about the limited access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including maternal and new-born care. In addition, we note with deep concern the heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence during emergencies, noting the severe impact such violence has on the physical and mental health of survivors. In that regard, the role played by civil society organizations and communities is important.

Once again, we deplore the increasing number and frequency of attacks on health care facilities and personnel in conflict settings. This is unacceptable. Attacks on health care are a violation of international humanitarian law. They deprive people of urgent care and have wide-ranging, long-term consequences.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a wakeup call to the devastating economic and societal impact a large scale health emergency can have in any country. It also demonstrated the importance of sustainable and resilient health systems and cross-sectoral cooperation for prevention, preparedness and response. These lessons together with a global call for equity served as an impetus for the current negotiations : we remain committed to continue working together towards a successful pandemic agreement ; as for the IHR, we call on all partners to redouble efforts to finalize our work and adopt the set of amendments on 1 June.

The serious shortfalls in funding for WHO operations in health emergencies, mentioned in the report, is a cause for major concern. It is in the collective interest

of the WHO's Member States to ensure that the Organization has the financial and human resources necessary to carry out its mission in emergency situations.

The EU is fully committed to strengthening our national capacities for prevention, preparedness and response. In accordance with the recently adopted EU Regulation on serious cross border threats to health, the Member States are in the process of providing the European Commission with reports on prevention, preparedness and response planning and implementation at national level and, where appropriate, cross-border interregional levels. An assessment of the EU Member States' prevention, preparedness and response planning will be conducted over the next three years. Articulation and synergy will be ensured through the integration of IHR SPAR reporting and the Joint External Evaluations, among other sources. The EU highly appreciates the work done by WHO in developing and refining tools within the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.