



European Union

Statement

WHO

77th World Health Assembly

(27 May – 1 June 2024)

Item 15.1 - Social determinants of health

Geneva, 30 May 2024

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EU Statement

Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

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

The EU welcomes the update on the progress of the WHO World Report on Social Determinants of Health Equity. The soon to be published report contains fourteen specific recommendations that we look forward to implement with WHO.

We welcome the efforts that have been carried out since 2008 regarding the three guiding targets that were defined in the agenda of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health.

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

However, we reckon that progress in addressing social determinants of health has been unequal and will need to be accelerated in order to meet the SDGs by 2030 and the 2040 targets as set out in 2008 report.

It is crucial that Member States address the social determinants underlying health inequalities and health inequities in particular the rising poverty in the wake of the triple crisis the world is facing: climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution.

On the matter, we would like to underline the crucial role of social protection to strengthen the resilience of populations and address many different social determinants that negatively of health, including poverty, malnutrition, lack of physical activity, substance abuse and lack of education.

Gender-specific factors are also crucial when it comes to health inequalities. Gender inequalities and stereotypes further hamper women's and girls' access to appropriate, quality health services. Interventions which do not take into consideration a gender perspective are ineffective and can even exacerbate these inequalities.

We need to collectively promote an intersectoral approach where prevention is seen as a key component. This requires broader governance and the development of evidence-based and participative policies, including the introduction of community-based and -led initiatives. This is the only way forward to encourage and finance effective interventions centered on the individual and his or her environment, to act on both health determinants and risk factors which may be individual or collective, environmental, social or economic.

The EU encourage all Member States to implement the recommendations set in the update, alongside WHO, by taking a whole of government and whole of society approach, beyond health, when the report is published.

Thank you.