



European Union

Statement

WHO

78th World Health Assembly

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Item 17.1 - WHO's work in health emergencies

Geneva, 21 May 2025

World Health Assembly 78 (WHA78)

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European Union Statement

Chair,

Director General,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

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

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina¹ and Georgia as well as Armenia align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States are deeply concerned about the rise of health emergencies due to natural disasters, climate change, armed conflicts, and many other drivers, which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable.

The work of the WHE Programme, the agility and rapid response of the Contingency Fund for emergencies and WHO's collaboration with civil society and other partners remains crucial for supporting countries to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from health emergencies. We value the WHO's Emergency Medical Teams initiative and welcome the newly certified Teams. The EU is fully committed to enhancing regional, national and subnational capacities for pandemic PPR, which includes the operationalization of the One Health approach.

¹ North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

As the WHO's largest donor, the EU and its Member States commend WHO's reprioritisation process and the ongoing reorganization and streamlining of WHE. WHE must remain a priority for WHO, whose expertise, global role and coordinating function in managing health emergencies are essential. Now more than ever, WHO has a crucial role to play in assessing public health risks and needs, fulfilling its coordinating role, and working together with all health actors so that the scarce resources for health emergencies are used optimally. Flexible and predictable emergency funding will be essential for timely and well-coordinated responses.

We would like to thank the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body co-chairs and all Member States for their commitment to conclude the Pandemic Agreement negotiations. It is a success for multilateralism but we are mindful of the remaining work to pave the way towards its opening for signature and ratification. Additionally, we look forward to the implementation of amendments to the International Health Regulations, which will strengthen global health security and protect future generations, in line with our shared values of equity and solidarity.

In accordance with the EU Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health, the Member States are currently conducting public health emergency preparedness assessments. In this regard, we advocate for coherence and complementarity with WHO-led and IHR mandated actions such as the self-assessment annual reporting tool (SPAR) and the Joint External Evaluations (JEE), as well as the Universal Health Preparedness Reviews (UHPR), which require consistency.

Being aware of the importance to adapt the core health emergency components to regional specificities, we welcome the adoption of the new Preparedness 2.0 strategy by WHO EURO.

Five years after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, we must not cease our efforts to strengthen our capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to health emergencies.

I thank you.