



European Union
Statement

WHO
79th World Health Assembly
(18 – 23 May 2026)

Item 3 – Address by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General

Geneva, 19 May 2026

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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, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova* and Georgia as well as Armenia align themselves with this statement.

We meet amid intense global instability. The impacts of conflicts, humanitarian health emergencies, climate change, and growing inequalities strain health systems and the resilience and coherence of the global health architecture.

We thank the Organisation's leadership and staff for advancing reforms and re-prioritise in order to meet the challenges faced by WHO. It is essential that WHO continues this transformation to further strengthen efficiency, renew its focus on its constitutional mandate, and remain independent, sustainably financed and fit-for-purpose in a highly constrained resource environment.

We fully recognize the importance of national responsibility and ownership related to health policies as well as of international cooperation. In line with this we attach great value to WHO's constitutional mandate, role and functions, including norms and standards setting, advancing health equity, universal health coverage and global health security. WHO should continue supporting countries in strengthening their health systems, including through health promotion, health emergency prevention, preparedness and response. These functions remain critical to delivering on the Fourteenth General Programme of Work.

We support a lean WHO-hosted process for reform of global health architecture, enhancing coherence and coordination and reducing gaps, fragmentation, duplication, and inefficiency among global health actors. We need a future-proof system that focuses on the core functions and a strong WHO at its center. Reform is urgently required, and the time to act is now. We remain committed to work with all partners to find consensus.

We underline the importance of Pandemic Prevention Preparedness and Response. We recognize the progress in the development of a PABS Annex to the Agreement and we remain committed to develop an effective and equitable PABS System that will make a real difference

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

on the ground. We are dedicated to continuing our important work and aim to finalise the negotiations by the next WHA.

The EU and its Member States remain firmly committed to multilateralism and stand ready to work with WHO and all partners, to strengthen global health outcomes while ensuring no person, country or region is left behind.

Thank you.