Mr. Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,

Portugal endorses the Report of the Regional Committees and praises the important role that WHO plays through their Regional Offices, particularly in implementing, supporting and advancing health policies and country level priorities.
We commend the new and timely Programme of Work of WHO EURO, stressing its three core priorities which we also take as our own. We highlight the importance of moving towards universal health coverage; this translates directly into our National Health Service, cornerstone of social inclusion and a guarantee of universal health care in which access and equity are safeguarded.

Mr. Chair,
The COVID-19 pandemic has dominated the global public health agenda as few health issues have done before. We highlight the progressive efforts of WHO in preparedness of countries, strengthening their capacities and ensuring coordinated and effective support when faced with cross-border health threats. We expect these threats to be more and more frequent.
We emphasize the future role played by the EU in strengthening regional preparedness, synergistically with WHO, as well as the relevance of the international treaty on pandemics proposed by the European Council. These actions will be crucial in order to face future health emergencies anchored in international mobilization and solidarity, allowing us to better anticipate, prepare for and respond to future pandemics.
A stronger and better-prepared EU means a stronger world, and we are all in the same battle against the same common enemy.
Thank you
[239 words]