

**Report of the EEHYC meeting on strategic development,  
strengthening cooperation between established National  
platforms and EEHYC and increasing involvement in WHO  
programs**

*Bonn, 21-22 September 2015*

Meeting hosted by the *WHO European Centre for Environment and Health* in Bonn, Germany, with support from the *German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building, and Nuclear Safety*.

**Context:**

Launched in Florence, Italy, in 2012, and legally established in Vilnius, Lithuania, in 2014, the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition (EEHYC) is an international nongovernment organization, a direct result of the commitments made by the Member States of the WHO European Region through the Parma Declaration to “ensure that youth participation is facilitated across all Member States at both national and international levels“. The Coalition aims to ensure that young people's environment and health needs and priorities are recognized and represented at all levels – specifically, within the European Environment and Health (EEH) process.

The September 2015 Bonn meeting served as an opportunity for EEHYC and National Youth Platforms to set a foundation for a strong cooperation among established National Platforms and explore options for further EEHYC organizational development. Executive Board reported back on the progress made since Capacity Building of National Youth Coordinators (NYCs) and Preparation for the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the WHO European Environment and Health Process (EEHP) meeting that took place in Bonn, Germany on 7-8 July 2014, and presented important achievements towards fulfilling the Parma commitments.

This meeting also helped develop strategies for greater engagement in the WHO EEH process as well as new project proposals for further involvement in the Protocol on Water and Health, the PEP *Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme* and *Health in Climate Change* (HIC) programs.

Based on these main objectives, the EEHYC meeting was structured so as to ensure:

- Collaboration between national youth networks and EEHYC and establishment of a more efficient and effective working structure;
- A critical evaluation of successes and challenges;

- Greater involvement in the WHO EEH programs (Protocol on Water and Health, The PEP and HIC)
- That EEHYC and its partners provide a meaningful input into the preparations of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Europe.

**Participants:**

European Environment and Health Youth Coalition Executive Board:

Adrian Vasnic – President

Alina Bezhenar – Secretary General

Antonio Pinto – Vice-President

Dovile Adamonyte - Vice-President

Jovana Dodos - Vice-President

European Environment and Health Youth Coalition Advisory Board:

David Rivett

Natalia Ciobanu

European Environment and Health Youth Coalition National Focal Points:

Danilo Arsenijevic – Serbia

Daniela Luca – Moldova

Gianina Vasnic – Romania

Maria Iemelianenko - Ukraine

Tim Brilli - Slovenia

Julia Baschinger, Austria – “Hygiene MUCH” brochure project coordinator, EEHYC communication officer

Ms. Elizabet Paunovic, Head of the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, Bonn

Ms. Bettina Menne, Programme Manager Climate change, sustainable development and green health services (CGS), WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, Bonn

Mr. Alexander Nies, Ex-Environment and Health Task Force Chair, Head of Directorate of Environmental Health, Chemical Safety, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

Professor Dragan Gjorgjev, European Environment and Health Task Force Chair, Institute of Public Health, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Mr. James Creswick, Technical Officer, Climate Change & Health, WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Bonn

Ms. Francesca Racioppi, Senior Policy and Programme Adviser, Environment and health Policy and Governance, WHO Regional Office for Europe (joined remotely)

### **Minutes of the meeting:**

#### *Welcome and introductions*

Ms Elizabet Paunovic, head of WHO Bonn office, welcomed all participants, inviting them to visit the office and meet and discuss with the staff whenever possible. Turning to the EEHYC and its activities she welcomed the work the Coalition was doing in bringing the voice of young people to the EH. Ms Paunovic also supported the idea that the Coalition might expand its participation, in cooperation with other WHO programs, on topics such as asbestos.

In agreeing with the proposal for the Coalition to expand its focus on other issues, Mr. Adrian Vasnic, Coalition President, pointed out that the Coalition is still growing its membership base and is working on the WASH, the PEP, and Air quality, and will soon include Climate Change activities on its agenda.

In terms of expansion and reach to young people, the Coalition has now established national platforms in 5 countries, Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova, Slovenia, Romania, but wants to continue to further develop representatives' attendance and involvement. Focal points participating at the meeting represented the members of each country

Coalition but additionally, contacts were still in place with those countries that were represented at the previous year's meeting. These contacts will be maintained in the hope of establishing national platforms but also when making contact with youth groups to participate in WHO national activities such as in Georgia, Croatia and FYR Macedonia.

*Report by the EB on EEHYC development progress:*

1. EEHYC participated in the *Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme Workshop "Improvement of Sustainable Urban Mobility for Better Health and Environment: Move to Improve"*, 24-25 September 2014, Kaunas, Lithuania. With the support of the WHO Regional Office for Europe and Kaunas City Municipality EEHYC organized a pedometers initiative "Move to Improve" where 67 participants from the age of 20 to 29 from the universities and NGO's of Kaunas city participated. The purpose of the pedometer initiative was to raise the awareness on the importance of youth participation in the field of environment and health and to improve physical activity among students. Also Youth Coalition presented the topic on „Challenges and Opportunities in Switching to Healthy and Environmentally Friendly Transport. Experiences and Views of the Young“. The presentation was followed by a discussion on how awareness raising, networking, communication and peer-to-peer learning might be integrated into education programmes.

2. EEHYC participated in the *4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group* of the European Environment and Health Task Force, 13 November 2014, Bonn, Germany. The discussions during the meeting were developed around preparations for the Mid Term Review meeting and EEHYC reiterated the proposals previously made of implementing on site MTR activities and corroborating with Israeli youth organisations, which were active in the MTR host country.

3. *Second Strategic Meeting of the Executive Board of EEHYC*, 4-8 February 2015, Piatra Neamt, Romania. The meeting was focused on the internal workings of the EB,

ways of improving efficiency and team building, plans for attending the scheduled Mid Term Review Meeting in Israel, setting up of National Platforms and planning in anticipation of a Bonn meeting for EEHYC EB and National Platforms representatives in autumn of 2015.

During their presence in Romania, EEHYC EB and advisors attended a meeting with the Mayor of Piatra Neamt and organised a press conference with the purpose of strengthening the cooperation with both the local authorities and local organisations interested in environment and health.

4. *6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board* which took place in Madrid, 24 February 2015

The Coalition declared its support for including civil society organisations as official observer to the Ministerial Board meetings. The Roadmap towards the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health was also discussed. The intervention of EEHYC during the meeting was mostly in relation with the Road map towards the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, and referred to “The importance of assuming short and medium SMART objectives that might be easily assessed and updated, rather than drafting strategic generic approaches”. It was also underlined the fact that the key points of the Road map are linked to other processes, such as PEP and WASH, where EEHYC is already active.

5. *European Environment and Health Task Force high-level Mid-Term Review meeting*— Haifa, 28-30 April 2015. The meeting aimed to review what has been achieved from 2010, when the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health was signed and the document *European Environment and Health Process (2010-2016): Institutional Arrangements* was adopted by Member States, until today, as well as to set the priorities for the period leading up to the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Europe which will be held in 2017. The Coalition played a full part in the meeting and had a meaningful contribution:

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- Oral interventions from EEHYC representatives in 3 sessions in which the importance of youth involvement was strengthened and the weight of the cooperation between EEHYC and Ministries of Environment, Health and Education Youth, schools and universities was emphasised. More importantly, Youth delegation called for establishment of EEHYC in all 53 member states.
- EEHYC President was part of the panel in Session 3 - Challenges and lessons learned, where he had a 7 minute speech followed by a question and answer session in relation to his presentation.
- Our Coalition had a poster presented at the poster exhibition alongside those of some Member States and other stakeholder groups. The poster is presented on the website [eehyc.org](http://eehyc.org).
- Presentation of the winning video of the 2014 photo and video competition “City in Motion, People First” organised by the EEHYC.
- EEHYC organised a Pedometer competition, encouraging the meeting participants to “walk the talk”, in line with the objective on promoting physical activity outlined in Parma Declaration.

From information gathered by WHO from Member States it became clear that many countries do not have policies of youth inclusion in the EH process. The Coalition would like to offer its help to those countries wishing to prepare policies or work to recruit young people to the process, in working towards this goal.

6. EEHYC took an active role in the *Fourth Meeting of the WHO Working Group on Health in Climate Change (HIC)*, 1-2 June 2015, Bonn, Germany. The purpose of the meeting was to explore how to best communicate health arguments for action, following on from the identification of key health messages from the recent 5th Assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as well as to evaluate a progress made in implementing the Parma agenda and its climate change target.

Since Youth Coalition participated in the HIC meeting for the very first time, the main

intention was to explore jointly with other HIC members how specifically the youth could contribute in a meaningful way. EEHYC sought to understand what the current work of the HIC Working Group is, what are the specific needs within the climate change and health process, and what are the relevant experiences and capacities of EEHYC so as to be able to contribute.

Throughout the discussions, EEHYC representatives had a number of interventions and points to make:

- Tour de table on country activities and successful communication on adaptation and mitigation actions in the WHO European Region – during this session the representatives briefly informed and updated other HIC members on the activities and projects the Coalition as a whole and some of its national members have been implementing in the field of Environment and Health under other program areas.
- EEHYC analysed and discussed with the other HIC members the drafts of 2 documents with the aim to finalize them.
- In addition to the aforementioned documents, EEHYC proposed that another document be prepared: Key Messages from Youth for Climate Change Negotiators.
- EEHYC was also asked to prepare a document for the young people in the WHO European region, following the same format: Key Messages for Youth.
- EEHYC discussed with a representative of International Medical Students' Association and of Regional Environmental Centre who were also present at the meeting, to liaise and work closer together.
- UNFCCC representative advised EEHYC to liaise with the youth representatives at the Climate Change negotiations for COP21 in order to convey the messages of youth on Climate Change.

### *National Platforms expansion*

In Bonn 2014 the National Youth Coordinator's guide was approved. The date for creation of EEHYC National Platforms was agreed to be December 2014. At present (September 2015) five national platforms have been created and approved by the Executive Board of EEHYC (10% out of the total countries in the European Region

of WHO) - Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia.

The strategic priority of the EEHYC for the first half of 2016 will be to increase the number of established platforms, especially into EU member states. Expansion strategy will be developed until membership will be achieved for the full 53 states of the WHO European Region.

Following questions from key support organisations active at national levels in the WHO European Region Countries, clarity was provided in regards to the structure and function of National Platforms; all details are explained in the Consortium Agreement that organisations have at their disposal in national language to read and agree upon.

The National Platforms are made up of member youth organisations that are working on environment and health issues. Representatives of these organisations give visibility to the platform by forming a mirror organisation to the international Coalition. Organizations are to design a national profile for the platform through publicising the work of the member organisations and making representation to ministers, with the support of the WHO focal points, or through other channels. Other activities should be designed by the platforms that work to achieving the Parma Commitments. They will also be required to inform the International Coalition of platform activities and attend annual meetings where the international executive board will be elected and other formal business of the Coalition will be agreed.

The creation of national platforms provide a way in which the voice and perspectives of young people can be presented, through their meaningful and democratic participation. The structure of the platforms should not be restrictive, the objective being to involve many and various organised youth groups to participate.

The process of building National Platforms may take time but the goal is to establish them in all WHO member states.

It is in EEHYC intention not only to have young people participating in international events related to EH, but to have a young person as an official delegate for each

country attending Ministerial Conference, and whenever possible, to the national delegations attending Task Force meetings. It is hoped that when countries are preparing their delegations, contact is made with EEHYC National Platforms and a representative from the Platform is nominated as the official youth delegate. In this way a more democratic and relevant form of youth participation can be ensured. The best way for countries to make this work is through establishing strong connections and relationships between EEHYC National Youth Focal Point and WHO EH Focal points. If no Platform is in place, and the WHO Focal Points need assistance, then the Coalition can become involved in seeking out, through their country networks, suitable youth representatives to either attend conferences as a youth representative or recommend a young person to be nominated as an official youth delegate.

The Coalition wanted to emphasise that there were still some gaps in understanding the true nature of meaningful youth participation in some countries and one role the Coalition could perform was to help in building this understanding, with help and support from supportive countries and organisations. Further discussion needs to be held on this. WHO and supporters had created a unique entity - the EEHYC - providing young people with direct access to the decision making processes as well as providing decision makers direct access to the well of enthusiasm and creativity of European youth. This is a main message to be transmitted throughout the EH process. During the meeting it was agreed that future work will be directed towards setting up new National Platforms, so that an EEHYC General Assembly and new Executive Board election can take place in autumn of 2016.

Also, Coalition efforts will be dedicated to empower existing National Platforms. Special attention will be paid to existing EEHYC programme implementation, WASH, HIC and PEP.

*National Platforms competence:*

Ukraine

4 organisations, 2 from health sector and 2 from environment.

A national programme on water and sanitation has been launched, with WHO Country Office as the main partner. Next step would be a partnership with MAMA-86, a very active Ukrainian NGO. Ukraine is passing through political and social changes, and EH issues are becoming a higher priority, as well as young people becoming more active and involved.

#### Moldova

National Platform — 8 partner NGOs + the Ministry of Environment. It was mentioned that the unstable political situation makes difficult dialogue and cooperation.

#### Serbia

As of March 2015 -3NGOs–national representation. In Serbia it will be assessed the opportunity of a meeting at the beginning of the next year. Also, Serbian National Platform will follow up on the translation of key documents into Serbian.

#### Slovenia

Two organisations, No Excuse Slovenia and Club of Medical Students.

#### Romania

Thirteen organisations, out of which it was mentioned CREED, who provided continuous financial and logistical support to Coalition, as well as Romanian Scouts Organisation that has more than 10 000 members.

Next session included a presentation about involvement of EEHYC within the framework of 2014-2016 Program of work of the Protocol on Water and Health, specifically information on the study “Survey on Hygiene Knowledge, Attitude and Practice” and the brochure “Hygiene MUCH”. The goal of the study was to get a better insight about the level of awareness and explore knowledge on hand hygiene among middle and high school students in Lithuania, Moldova and Romania, and encourage correct hygiene practices.

EEHYC developed the brochure “Hygiene MUCH” with Austria in the project lead. The aim was to raise awareness for the integral role that hand washing and clean, functioning sanitary facilities play in everyday life. The brochure addresses students of all ages, therefore it’s written and designed in a youth-friendly way. It is available in 3 languages English, German and Russian, for free download at [www.eehyc.org](http://www.eehyc.org) Full information is available in the final report documents! <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B6yPzd9b6WgZRXhRTTNZSDAyZzA&usp=sharing>

Next activity was an ample overview of *Health Impacts of Climate Change*–presentation by Mr. James Creswick, Technical Officer WHO.

The content of the presentation was divided in

1. Overview of health impacts of climate change
2. Adaptation to protect health from climate change
3. Mitigation and health co-benefits
4. Current and future projects
5. Feedback from Working Group on Health in Climate Change (HIC)
6. Potential for increased youth engagement in climate change policy and negotiation.

During the presentation it was mentioned WHO’s work to identify evidence based policy options to help prevent, prepare for and respond to the health effects of climate change, as well as its support for Member States in selecting and implementing the most suitable policies, measures and strategies. Regarding this aspect, the Coalition and its National Platform should position themselves as meaningful partners, working together with both WHO and Member States in identifying evidence based policy options as well as in selecting best strategies.

One of the other points of the presentation that were incorporated in the follow up dialogue between Coalition and National Platforms was in relation with the proven,

cost-effective interventions against every climate-sensitive health impact, which can be lifesaving now, and reduce vulnerability to climate change. Strengthening of preventive public health functions, including climate resilience, was presented as the best protection for the future.

When it comes to the more active role of young people in general, and EEHYC in particular towards HIC, it was said that health professionals can be champions for change, enlisting the involvement of their organisations, associations, other interested parties, to advocate for climate change adaptation and mitigation using health arguments that should be central to climate change policy, debates and planning.

Full presentation can be made available upon request.

*Increased youth engagement:*

Working Group on Health in Climate Change (HIC)

Development of key messages for youth on health and climate change, advocacy and engagement in the CC negotiations, via IFMSA — very well organized — representation at the COPs — 5 people – as well as via national student associations or other channels.

*David Saddington – guest speaker- youth activist*

Mr Saddington held a brief presentation on flooding in the UK, importance of youth — small steps for constant progress. The main conclusion of his speech was that youth are not banned by formal protocols and could act with more enthusiasm.

*Workshop: Preparation for 2016.*

The meeting discussed activities in the topics of Climate Change, WASH and PEP for 2016. Groups were formed and three proposed work plans were developed.

**1. THE PEP - Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme**

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Support: Alina Bezhenar, EEHYC Vice-President

Link: <http://www.thepep.org/en/welcome.htm>

Transport plays an essential role in economic and social development in our societies. It ensures access to jobs, housing goods and services and provides for the mobility of people and for the opening up of peripheral and isolated regions.

Three priority areas and related actions were selected to constitute the policy framework for THE PEP:

- integration of environmental and health aspects into transport policy in particular in relation to decision making processes, monitoring and impact assessment;
- urban transport, involving measures in land-use planning, and for promoting high quality and integrated public transport and improving safe conditions of alternative modes of transport;
- demand side management and modal shift and special attention is paid to the needs of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and of South-Eastern Europe, as well as issues related to ecologically particularly sensitive areas.

Proposed ideas from the session:

1. Questions on the flags on trams and put EEHYC logo → visibility, raising awareness

“Do you know?” questions

“Meet your driver day”

Supporting: Daniela Luca, Moldova

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2. Initiatives with Universities — subsidised tickets for public transport
3. Fashionable transportation
4. Make a research and do a questionnaire about youth motivation to use sustainable means of transportation - Natalia Ciobanu leads, Daniela Luca co-leads.
5. How many people know about sustainable transport? Do a research of knowledge - Natalia Ciobanu leads, Danilo Arsenijevic co-leads.
6. E.g. Critical Mass Romania -the same events
7. Ticket for public transport is a discount to get 5-10% for a coffee/tea
8. Transport, Environment and Health related Postcards
9. Bike parking places near schools – Danilo Arsenijevic "Advocacy/fundraising project"
10. Questions on the public place (WHO Ukraine examples; UNDP billboard)

## *2. Health and Climate Change:*

Support: Dovile Adamonyte, EEHYC Vice-President

Climate Change Working Group — members from National platforms. The call should be launched in the upcoming two weeks.

Key messages from youth of the National level - deadline for the final version is 15th of October.

Leading person - Natalia Ciobanu (AB member). Co-lead: Daniela Luca (Moldova) and Dovile Adamonyte (Lithuania)

Key messages for youth in youth friendly language. Leading person - Dovile Adamonyte (Lithuania). Co-lead Daniela Luca (Moldova).

Manifest of youth position regarding climate change (document for the EHMB). Leading person - Adrian Vasnic EEHYC President (Romania).

Assessment at the national level (information from Focal Points of EEHP, Ministries etc.) - project for the near future.

Adopted training courses (ecological footprint): lead – Daniela Luca (Moldova).

**3. WASH programme - Project under the Protocol on Water and Health (for more information please visit: <http://www.unece.org/?id=2975>)**

Support for all WASH projects: Jovana Dodos, EEHYC Vice-President

1. My «toilet story» - project proposal drafted, coordinator has to be appointed
2. WASH in Schools Checklist - project proposal drafted, coordinator has to be appointed
3. Advocacy document - continuation of the WASH in Schools Survey project, coordinator has to be appointed
4. Additional printing of "HYGIENE MUCH" brochure and translation in other national languages coordinator: Jovana Dodos co-leads: Maria Iemeljanenko, Danilo Arsenijevic, Dovile Adamonyte and Gianina Vasnic.
5. Writing a project proposal for building national partnerships coordinator has to be appointed
6. Dissemination workbook + Case Studies on WASH in Schools coordinator has to be appointed
7. Blog Toilet Reporter coordinator has to be appointed
8. WASH education for pre-school children coordinator has to be appointed

#### *Roadmap to the Ministerial Conference 2016*

The Coalition will actively participate in the next WHO EEH Ministerial Conference. No date has been agreed and the working group has yet to meet. The EEHYC will proactively prepare a road map for youth participation in the preparation of the ministerial and youth declaration, in the Coalition's strategic representation at the

Conference and I active youth participation in on sport activities.

1. EEHYC will submit an application for the membership in Ad Hock Working Group on the organization of the 6th MC - Alina Bezhenar & Adrian Vasnic (done as of September 2015)
2. EEHYC wants to take an active role in drafting the next ministerial declaration; EEHYC will strongly advocate to have a youth article in the ministerial declaration – Jovana Dodos lead, Dovile Adamonyte co-lead.
3. Youth Declaration and Youth Commitment to Act (to be produced by the 6th MC and presented as an official outcome of the 6th MC) - Jovana Dodos co-lead, Danilo Arsenijevic supporting.
4. Strategic expansion of the Coalition in order to ensure legitimate representation at the 6th MC – Julia Baschinger lead, Tim Brilliant GianinaVasnic co-leads, Alina Bezhenar supporting.
5. EEHYC on spot activities at the 6th MC (side event, participation in the panel discussions, other activities) - Adrian Vasnic lead, Daniela Luca co-lead, Danilo Arsenijevic supporting.

*Workshop on the EEHYC external image & communication:*

- Developing the dissemination strategy for EEHYC WASH in Schools brochure;

The focus of this session was to identify stakeholders, countries or regions and methods for disseminating the “HYGIENE MUCH” brochure. To guarantee, that the brochure will reach the target group of 12-19 year old students, main stakeholders

were found to be schools, universities, public institutes and regional Education Authorities.

The dissemination of the brochure will start in Austria, Ukraine, Romania and the United Kingdom. Translation into additional languages for disseminating the brochure as pdf is envisaged.

- *EEHYC slogan*

This part included a silent brainstorm of all participants for a EEHYC slogan which should illustrate the EEHYC`s international role combined with its efforts for youth participation in the EEH process.

The top three slogans:

1. Who if not us?
2. Youth cares
3. Youth today, leader Today

The final decision will be made via internet vote - Adrian Vasnic EEHYC President (Romania) lead

- *EEHYC communication strategy*

To strengthen the internal structure and cooperation between the National Platforms and the EEHYC and to visualize the communication opportunities, a work-in-process document prepared and drafted by the Communication Working group was presented, discussed and adopted in the plenary. In terms of internal communication, it includes implementing a newsletter for national Youth Coordinators and Focal Points of National Platforms and appointing Ms. Julia Baschinger as responsible for updating and taking care of the EEHYC website. First evaluation of the communication strategy will be in March 2016.

Overall, the “EEHYC meeting on strategic development, strengthening cooperation between established National platforms and EEHYC and increasing involvement in

WHO programs” reached its aim, bringing together EEHYC core group, newly established National Platform members, as well as WHO expertise.

For the first time, EEHYC has set in place bounding, formal partnerships with clusters of organisations and institutions that are interested in the topic of environment and health from a youth perspective. Moving from individual to organisational membership has provided EEHYC and his partners with mechanisms of increasing the quality and amplitude of their support and contribution towards EHP.

The short term strategy of the Coalition, besides including follow-up activities on The PEP, WASH and HIC, has also a strong focus on further development from a membership base perspective, expansion being considered as a priority for the first half of the year 2016.