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**WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION
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**ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L'EUROPE**

**ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ
ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ
ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЕ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ БЮРО**



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
EUROPE**

**COMMISSION ÉCONOMIQUE DES
NATIONS UNIES POUR L'EUROPE**

**ЕВРОПЕЙСКАЯ
ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ**

**TRANSPORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT PAN-EUROPEAN PROGRAMME
THE PEP**

**Preparatory meeting for the
Fifth High-level Meeting on
Transport, Health and Environment**

30 June 2020, Online meeting

**ENGLISH ONLY
16 July 2020**

REPORT OF THE MEETING

I. INTRODUCTION AND PARTICIPATION

1. The Preparatory meeting for the Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment was convened online, because of travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Participants from the following member States attended the meeting: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, France, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. Representatives from the following stakeholders also participated in the meeting: European Environment Agency; Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport; and World Bicycle Industry Association. Representatives of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the Netherlands also attended.
3. The Secretariat of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) was represented by Mr. Nicholas Bonvoisin, Ms. Virginia Fusé, and Ms. Amy Choi (UNECE Environment Division), Mr. Francesco Dionori (UNECE Sustainable Transport Division), and Ms. Francesca Racioppi, Mr. Massimo Cozzone and Ms. Nino Sharashidze (WHO/Europe).
4. Mr. Vadim Donchenko, Vice-chair of the Bureau, opened the meeting on behalf of the Chair, who was able to join only later because of technical issues.
5. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda as proposed by the Secretariat.

II. IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

6. The Vice-chair considered the new challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and their impact on transport, health and environment. He noted that:
 - a. The new challenges push us to think about a new conception of transport and mobility;
 - b. THE PEP confirmed its role as a forum to discuss the new situation;
 - c. In its work, THE PEP should consider differences among cities and countries in the region, to be able to adequately address the different challenges they face;
 - d. The low level of use of public transport could be a major issue. Member States might have to consider providing financial support to overcome possible financial deficits, in addition to support on how to manage the demand for public transport and on how to ensure safety.
7. The secretariat summarized the discussions at the Extraordinary meeting under THE PEP (22 April 2020, online meeting). That meeting was convened by the Bureau of THE PEP to reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on transport, health and environment issues in member States. At that meeting:

- a. Delegates from Austria, host country of the Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, announced that they had decided to ask to THE PEP Bureau and Steering Committee to postpone the High-level Meeting to 2021;
 - b. Participants welcomed the initiative to develop Green and Healthy Sustainable Transport Principles. A task force, which was to meet every month, was to deliver its output by the eighteenth session of the Steering Committee (25-27 November 2020).
8. The Chair summarized the discussion that followed in the present meeting and highlighted that:
- a. In some countries, the rate of active mobility increased. Vienna recorded an increase of up to 45 percent in the number of cyclists in selected counting stations during the lockdown and soon afterwards. In Switzerland, there were similar positive experiences in urban areas;
 - b. Member States needed to be aware that public transport might need increased funding or to receive public support. Issues faced by the sector included the public's safety concerns. Public transport users might have to avoid traveling during peak hours and privilege home deliveries;
 - c. An increase of digitalization allowed many workers to work remotely during the pandemic. Should this trend continue after the pandemic, the new working method could reduce travel needs for commuting or for short meetings;
 - d. Identifying a new balance in the use of different modes of transport was important. Increasing active mobility to relieve the burden on public transport, working remotely and, in the longer term, integrating transport planning and land-use planning could be solutions. Further discussions on how to reach a new balance could benefit from the identification of which expertise was needed.

Effects on the outcome of the High-level Meeting

THE PEP facts and figures brochure

9. Representatives of RIVM presented an overview of the preparation of the brochure on THE PEP facts and figures and a draft outline of the document. They informed participants that:
- a. An annotated version of the document was to be sent to the secretariat by 7 August 2020 to allow submission as an official document. The month of July was to be used to gather data, and representatives of member States and stakeholders were invited to contact RIVM or the secretariat to provide data or names of experts;
 - b. An additional meeting was to be organized in September 2020 to discuss the indicators and data identified by then;
 - c. One of the issues faced by RIVM was data availability, especially for some of the themes or challenges identified in the draft declaration. The availability of data covering the entire UNECE region in an even manner was also an issue, with member States in the European Union having more data available.
10. Participants concluded the following:
- a. The entire UNECE region needed to be represented in the data in the brochure. A solution could be using more effectively "indirect" indicators, for instance using transport indicators, usually more available, to infer the impact on the environment;
 - b. One of the conclusions of the work to prepare the brochure could be that more needs to be done on data collection and data availability on transport, health and environment. A political commitment that data are needed could be obtained at the High-level Meeting. The Chair and Vice-chairs would work with the secretariat to identify how to include this aspect in the draft declaration;
 - c. Participants were to provide a feedback on the draft outline of the brochure through the secretariat by 10 July 2020.

Green and Healthy Sustainable Transport Principles

11. The secretariat recalled the decision by participants at the extraordinary meeting on 22 April to establish a task force working on Green and Healthy Sustainable Transport Principles. The task force had been meeting monthly since its establishment and elaborated terms of reference and the content outline of the Principles. The Principles were to be followed by an implementation plan, that would need to be created should the Principles be adopted by the Fifth High-level Meeting. Capacity-building activities might be a part of the implementation plan. The task force foresaw presenting the draft Principles at the eighteenth session of the Steering Committee in November.
12. Participants thanked the secretariat and expressed appreciation for the work of the task force so far and the interest that it had created. They also recommended to keep in mind the economic framework that will influence the transport sector in the short- to medium-term.

Work within the Partnerships

13. Representatives of France and the Russian Federation reported on the Partnership on transport planning and land-use planning.
14. Including the impact of the pandemic in the Handbook on Sustainable Transport and Urban Planning, prepared under the Partnership for the Fifth High-level Meeting, was no longer possible as the publication had reached the printing stage. Participants agreed that:
 - a. Many issues raised during the period of the pandemic were already included in the handbook;
 - b. The handbook included many examples of success stories of integrating land-use and transport planning. The examples confirm the importance for an interface between transport planning and land-use planning;
 - c. The draft declaration should reflect the positive effects of the examples given in the handbook.
15. The Partnership's leaders also informed participants that the training programme and exchange between a Russian and a French university had been interrupted because of the pandemic.
16. Representatives of Austria updated participants on the Partnership on cycling. The pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion was to be updated including a new chapter on the role of cycling during pandemic crisis. The chapter would be based on experiences from cities, regions and countries. Partnership's members were also to update the Toolbox of actions for cycling promotion, on the basis of available experience from the countries in the pan-European Region. These updates will be discussed during the virtual meeting of the Partnership on 14 September 2020 and discussed during the eighteenth meeting of the Steering Committee Meeting.
17. Representatives from Austria reported that they were to start work on sustainable tourism along the Danube River, as a continuation of the work in the Transdanube Partnership. The aim was to collect Danube travel stories along European Union-certified routes on different topics and themes. In doing so, small businesses along the routes identified would be engaged. As the target was sustainable tourism and not mass tourism, the Partnership's leaders hoped that the work could start soon, despite the pandemic. THE PEP was to be involved as much as possible.
18. The representative of Switzerland recommended including a Swiss network in the work on tourism along the Danube River. The network, Schweizmobil,¹ was using electronic tools to promote sustainable transport.

III. PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTH HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

19. Participants considered how to re-focus the programme and output of the High-level Meeting in view of the discussions reported above.
20. Dates and the format of the meeting were also discussed. Participants discussed that:
 - a. The High-level Meeting would preferably take place in person. However, to avoid losing momentum, it could also be organized online;

¹ <https://www.schweizmobil.ch/en/summer.html>

- b. Organizing the High-level Meeting online would change the nature of the meeting, making it more formalistic. This format would also prevent brainstorming, which can lead to innovations and new initiatives. Interpretation could also be an issue.
21. The Austrian delegation informed the participants that they had scheduled an internal meeting to discuss dates and formats. Focal points could expect, at the latest by the meeting of the Steering Committee, new dates to be announced.

Outcomes of the High-level Meeting

Draft declaration

22. The secretariat presented pending issues in the draft declaration:
- a. The list of challenges in the preamble (items (a) to (i) of the third preambular paragraph) needed to be finalized and validated;
 - b. Reflections from the COVID-19 pandemic could be inserted in the preamble and reference added to resilience. Furthermore, member States could discuss how to include the draft Principles in the body of the declaration or as one of the annexes;
 - c. In paragraph 1, the word “ambitious” was in square brackets. Member States could discuss whether to retain it, also considering that in other languages it has a less positive nuance;
 - d. Paragraph 2 (f), which was in square brackets, starts with a wording that is less direct and clear than the other paragraphs. Member States might wish to consider and re-formulate the paragraph;
 - e. Paragraph 4, about a legal instrument on THE PEP, was presented in three versions. The first was a proposal from the secretariat, the second an amendment supported by France, North Macedonia and Switzerland, and the third, an alternative amendment proposed by the Russian Federation. Member States were to indicate which wording to use;
 - f. In paragraph 17 (c) there is the phrase “including the setting of national targets” in square brackets. Member States were to take a decision on whether it should be included;
 - g. Annex I would need to be revised to reflect the list of challenges included in the preamble.
23. Participants considered that the Principles needed to be reflected in the draft declaration. The Chair suggested to re-shape the declaration so that it addressed the Principles and the new challenges, while also suggesting solutions. The secretariat, the Chair and Vice-chairs and the drafting group were to elaborate a new draft.
24. If the draft declaration was not ready in English by the submission date for official documents, it might be translated with extra-budgetary resources and submitted in the three official languages.
25. The secretariat presented the results of a non-exhaustive overview of legal instruments related to transport, health and environment. The Steering Committee requested the secretariat to:
- a. Verify whether any new legally binding instrument had been elaborated or entered into force since the last study under THE PEP;
 - b. Assess whether there is a basis for the High-level Meeting to mandate a group of legal experts to undertake deeper research and propose the content for a potential legal instrument under THE PEP.
26. The participants appreciated the presentation. They agreed that the formulation supported by the Russian Federation of the paragraph in the draft declaration could be retained.
27. Participants decided that the drafting group responsible for the draft declaration should meet to discuss a re-formulation of the document.

Draft workplan for 2021-2026.

28. The secretariat presented the draft workplan for 2021-2026 updated to include the changes in the timing of the High-level Meeting and the work on the Principles.
29. The participants agreed that:

- h. An additional update of the workplan should include the consequences of the pandemic and asked the secretariat to revise the draft;
- i. Additional comments could be sent to the secretariat by 10 July 2020.

New timeline towards the High-level Meeting

- 30. Participants decided to have a meeting back-to-back with the September meeting of the task force to discuss the revised draft of the declaration. The secretariat was to inform focal points about a date for the meeting. A later date could not be considered, as time was need for the translation of the document into French and Russian.
- 31. The secretariat communicated the dates of the next meetings of the task force: 29 July, at the end of August (date to be identified) and at the end of September (date to be identified) 2020.
- 32. The representative from the Netherlands volunteered to write a one-page document setting out a storyline linking all the ongoing activities of THE PEP (the draft Vienna Declaration; Green and Healthy Sustainable Transport Principles and Facts and Figures brochure). He was to share the draft with the Chair and Vice-chairs by 10 July 2020.

IV. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

- 33. The Chair summarized the discussions and decisions of the meeting and closed the meeting.