

WHO Regional Committee for Europe

16 October 2025

75th Session

Agenda item 11 - Matters arising from resolutions and decisions of the World Health Assembly and the WHO Executive Board: regional implications

The European Respiratory Society (ERS) expresses its support to the inclusion of Agenda point 11 on the adoption of the lung health resolution at 78th World Health Assembly (WHA).¹

This year marks a turning point in the global response to respiratory diseases, advancing equitable, integrated care for lung health worldwide.

The global momentum has been undeniable, with Member States agreeing to the first ever resolution on integrated lung health covering diseases from Lung Cancer to Tuberculosis at the WHA and the UN General Assembly having a dedicated section on respiratory diseases in the UN political declaration.²

This was also the year of the first ever report on Chronic Respiratory Diseases (CRDs), developed in partnership between the European Respiratory Society (ERS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The report has revealed a hard truth: CRDs - including asthma, COPD as well as others - remain under diagnosed, poorly managed and underestimated in their impact on health systems across the WHO European Region. Although often preventable and manageable, CRDs are among the leading contributors to disability and death in the Region, particularly as underlying causes of cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Limited diagnostic tools, delayed referrals, and insufficient training further hinder early detection.³

¹ Lung Health Resolution adopted at the 78th World Health Assembly <https://www.knowledge-action-portal.com/en/content/lung-health-resolution-adopted-78th-world-health-assembly>. Date last updated: 28 May 2025. Date last accessed: October 15 2025

² [https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2025/09/25/default-calendar/fourth-high-level-meeting-of-the-un-general-assembly-on-the-prevention-and-control-of-ncds-and-the-promotion-of-mental-health-and-wellbeing-\(hlm4\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2025/09/25/default-calendar/fourth-high-level-meeting-of-the-un-general-assembly-on-the-prevention-and-control-of-ncds-and-the-promotion-of-mental-health-and-wellbeing-(hlm4)). Date last updated: 25 September 2025. Date last accessed: October 15 2025.

³ World Health Organisation. Chronic respiratory diseases in the WHO European Region. <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12340-52112-79990> . Date last updated: 12 June 2025. Date last accessed: October 15 2025

With 81.7 million people in the Region living with a CRD and 6.8 million newly diagnosed each year, these conditions have still slipped completely away from policy priorities.⁴

Tobacco use and air pollution remain key preventable drivers^{5,6} and the economic cost of inaction is also extremely high, with productivity losses due to CRDs (among people aged 30 to 74 in the Region) estimated at over US\$ 20 billion annually.

The WHO–ERS report outlines key actions for Member States: increasing public awareness and health literacy, expanding diagnostic capacity, improving disease surveillance by ensuring multimorbidities are recorded on death certificates, and developing comprehensive national and regional policies on CRDs.⁷ Yet, a major gap remains in data and research - there have been no significant medical breakthroughs in CRDs for over three decades, and clear targets are needed to guide investment in surveillance and innovation. Despite these challenges, the WHO European Region offers examples of leadership, such as in Portugal and Finland, demonstrating that progress is possible with sustained policy commitment.

We must continue our efforts and ensure a strong implementation and effective actions, joining forces between the health community, civil societies and governments to ensure a better and healthier life across Europe and the world.

⁴ World Health Organisation. Chronic respiratory diseases in the WHO European Region. <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12340-52112-79990> . Date last updated: 12 June 2025. Date last accessed: October 15 2025

⁵ World Health Organisation. Chronic respiratory diseases in the WHO European Region. <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12340-52112-79990> . Date last updated: 12 June 2025. Date last accessed: October 15 2025.

⁶ Air Pollution. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution>. Date last updated: 20 August 2025. Date last accessed: October 15 2025.

⁷ World Health Organisation. Chronic respiratory diseases in the WHO European Region. <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12340-52112-79990> . Date last updated: 12 June 2025. Date last accessed: October 15 2025