

# **STRENGTHENING PHC MODELS OF CARE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS THROUGH ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF WORKFORCE**

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**SCOPE AND PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

**28-30 November 2023**  
**Trieste, Italy**

## SCOPE AND PURPOSE

### BACKGROUND

To realize the core priorities of the European Programme of Work, 2020–2025 – “United Action for Better Health” (EPW) – the urgency of which has been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic – WHO Europe has developed the Roadmap for Health in the Western Balkans (2021–2025). The Roadmap scopes the following: Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, and Kosovo<sup>[1]</sup>.

The Western Balkans (WBs) expressed their commitment to joint action to accelerate an equitable and sustainable recovery and development to close the health gap between the subregion and the EU. Hence, the Roadmap builds on WBs health goals and their efforts to support EPW implementation and to move the subregion ahead through strengthened partnership and solidarity and by forging important synergies within and across countries/area and partners.

The Roadmap focuses on nine High Impact Action Areas, including strengthening primary health care (PHC) and workforce that reflect the subregion’s commitment to the core priorities and flagship initiatives of the EPW and the SDG targets.

Strategic partnerships across the subregion and intercountry/area collaboration are essential for delivering on the Roadmap. In recent years, the WBs have accelerated collaboration for health together with the countries of central and eastern Europe through their joint Central European Initiative (CEI). Building on the strong cooperation between the WHO Europe and the CEI, including the joint Task force in response to Covid-19 emergency (2020), in 2021 and 2022 successful CEI-WHO collaboration focused on primary health care in Western Balkans, and the relations between CEI and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region of Italy, and two intercountry/area meeting were held in Trieste: ‘Realizing the potential of primary health care to deliver on the Roadmap for Health in the Western Balkans’ (2021) and Scaling-up Strategies for Primary Health Care in (2022).

### WORKSHOP

In 2023, moving forward with the implementation of joint activities for the countries/areas of the Western Balkans in PHC under the Roadmap, **the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Balkans Inter-country/area meeting will be held on 28-30 November 2023 in Trieste, Italy.** The three-day meeting will be co-organized by WHO/Europe and CEI, and hosted at CEI Headquarters in Trieste, Italy. The WHO European Center for Primary health care and the Office for Health Workforce and Service Delivery will jointly moderate and facilitate the workshop.

The focus of the 2023 meeting will be on PHC models, family medicine and workforce, with an exchange of knowledge about the current state of PHC and health workforce in WBs countries/area and with a specific deep dive on workforce shortage, attrition and retention challenges.

<sup>[1]</sup>All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

## OBJECTIVES

The meeting will aim at strengthening the intercountry/area collaboration on PHC and workforce with the following objectives:

1. to present PHC and family medicine models across the region and highlight regional experiences;
2. To discuss current challenges about PHC and workforce in the WBs countries/area
3. To identify relevant approaches and provide policy recommendations

Bringing together public health authorities and representatives from the WBs, the purpose of this technical meeting is to support WBs relevant stakeholders to prioritize and plan actions and next steps in the WBs around the above-mentioned focus areas.

The meeting will aim, to facilitate further cross-country/area learning, and to build synergies in the future. WHO and CEI will join forces by bringing together relevant technical expertise. Headquartered in Trieste, Italy, the CEI will host the event and bring in the Italian expertise from the selected healthcare institutions in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region. The participants will also be offered an opportunity to join on-site field visit to selected health facilities.

## PARTICIPANTS

Key stakeholders and authorities responsible for PHC and health workforce planning– 3 from each WB country/area; WHO Representatives/Heads of Offices and/or country office staff working on PHC and workforce; WHO/Europe staff; CEI representatives, regional health authorities (Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Italy), invited experts.

<sup>[1]</sup>All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

**Tuesday 28 November 2023**

**Technical Session Nr 1.**

**Realizing the potential of Primary Health Care (PHC) models of care in the Western Balkans through addressing the workforce challenges**

**09:30 – 10:00**

**Registration and welcome coffee**

Venue: Trieste (TBC)

**10:00 – 10:20**

**Official opening and Introductory statement**

CEI

Venue: Trieste (TBC)

WHO Europe

*Format: plenary session*

FVG Region

**10:20 – 10:50**

**Introduction to the technical part of the program**

**Introduction of the program, WHO & CEI – 10 min**

WHO and CEI team and countries/area delegation  
introduction

Expectations from countries/area

**Setting the scene: Transforming PHC models of care  
presentation (10 min)**

**10:50 – 11:50**

**Country experiences in transforming PHC models of care  
and advancing Family Medicine**

- Slovenia (15 min)
- Italy (15 min)
- Country 3 (15 min)

**Presentations and Q&A**

**11:50 – 12:05**

**Key priority areas for transforming PHC models of care and  
family medicine in WHO European region**

**12:05 – 13:00**

**Discussion / Interventions of the Delegations**

**13:00 – 14:00**

**Lunch**

Venue: TBC

## Technical Session Nr 2.

### Improving Family medicine approach in Primary Health Care in the Western Balkans

14:00 – 15:15

Venue: TBC

**Moderator:**

**Format:** *moderated discussion*

**Moderated discussion: Multidisciplinary team in PHC service delivery**

- Example 1 multidisciplinary team in NCDs
- Example 2 multidisciplinary team in mental health
- Example 2 multidisciplinary team in palliative care
- Example 3 Italy/FVG Community-oriented care

#### Presentations and Q&A

15:15-15:30

Venue: TBC

### Health break

15:30 – 17:00

Venue: TBC

**Moderator**

**Format:** *plenary session*

Presentations from delegations on changes on PHC models of care (10 min each).

Presentations to reflect on the *current model of PHC - success factors, results, challenges and lessons learned choosing one of examples such as NCDs, mental health, palliative care, community- oriented care.*

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Serbia
- Kosovo<sup>1</sup>

#### Moderated discussion and Q&A (30 min)

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<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

19:00 – 21:00 **Dinner (hosted by the CEI)**

Venue: TBC

**Wednesday 29 November 2023**

**Technical Session Nr 3:**

**PHC Workforce Challenges in rural and remote areas**

**09:00-10:30**

Venue: TBC

**Moderator:** *Format:*  
*plenary session*

**Focus:** What are the challenges of workforce in rural areas?  
What are the PHC models in rural areas? What are the strategies to  
strengthen PHC workforce in rural areas?

Presentations:

- **Recap on Day 1** and link to workforce challenges
- **Setting the scene:** the current state of health workforce with focus  
on attrition and retention challenges
- **Country experiences**
- **Q&A session**

**10:30-11:00**

Venue: TBC

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**Coffee break**

**11:00-13:00**

Venue: TBC

**Moderator:**  
**Format:** *plenary session  
and moderated panel  
discussion*

**Focus:** Retention policy spotlights. What are the barriers and  
facilitators to strengthen the PHC workforce in rural areas?

Topics:

- **Role and responsibilities in rural areas**
- **Incentives**
- **Networked approach**
- **Legislative changes**

**Moderate panel discussion with Country/area round table**

**13:00 - 14:00 Lunch**

Venue: TBC

## GROUPWORK

**14:00-15:30**

Venue: TBC

**Moderator(s):**

**Format:** group work

### Introduction of group work

#### Session name

**Focus:** What inspired you from the presentations and discussion from all technical sessions that you would like take away to your country/area? What policy guidelines you would provide to your country/area? What concrete actions would you apply in your context?

**Activity:** countries/area group work

**15:30-16:00**

**Output:** presentations by country/area teams

## Health Break

## Country/area action plans discussion and conclusions

**16:00 - 17:30**

Venue: TBC

**Co-moderators:** TBD

**Format:** presentations and panel discussion

### Countries/area team final presentations

Policy recommendations and key takeaways from the meeting and their application to countries/area context – each country/area discuss and choose three concrete actions

- Albania presentation
- Panel reflection 15 min
  
- Bosnia and Herzegovina presentation
- Panel reflection 15 min
  
- Montenegro presentation
- Panel reflection 15 min

- North Macedonia presentation
- Panel reflection 15 min
- Serbia presentation
- Panel reflection 15 min
- Kosovo presentation<sup>2</sup>
- Panel reflection 15 min

17:30 – 18:00

**Conclusion and closing remarks:**  
WHO – CEI

**Thursday 30 November 2023**

**FIELD VISIT**

09:30 - 12:00

**Field visit visits to the community-hospital  
experience in Trieste (TBC)**

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