



WHO Appoints Hans Kluge as Regional Director for Europe



[Dr Hans Kluge](#) was endorsed by WHO's Executive Board as the new regional director for Europe for the next five years. His work would span over the 53 countries of the WHO European Region with a population of 900 million people.

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A medical doctor and a Belgian national, Dr Kluge has extensive international experience of 25 years in medical practice and public health. Prior to the current appointment, he served as Director of the Division of Health Systems and Public Health, and Special Representative of the Regional Director to combat Multi/Extensively Drug Resistant Tuberculosis at the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

As the new regional director for Europe, he will be focusing on the transformation of health systems on all levels. Dr Kluge called for developing a pan-European culture of health, in which public and private decision-making is guided by health and well-being goals "and everyone can make healthy choices." "I am committed to delivering united action for better health. This means applying the best data and evidence, demanding increasing investment in health, strengthening our health systems around people's needs, and extending inclusive and non-discriminatory access to health care to all. By so doing, we build fair, happy, sustainable societies for ourselves and generations to come," he said.

Dr Kluge has taken over from Dr Piroska Östlin, Regional Director ad interim, following the appointment of Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab as Deputy Director-General of WHO in 2019.

Six strategic directions

In his [comment](#) to The Lancet Public Health, Dr Kluge explained that "WHO Europe needs a new vision that meets the challenges of today and the threats and opportunities of tomorrow."

Some elements of this vision include:

- Dealing with the main drivers of disease burden, including alcohol-related disease and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.
- Recognition of how important the decisions in other sectors, such as economic, educational, and welfare policies, can be on the public health. To tackle the health challenges, a biomedical approach needs to be complemented with other disciplines and skillsets.
- Working to achieve people-centred health systems, bringing together public health, primary care, specialist services, and social care.
- Safeguarding all groups within populations including the underserved, marginalised and most vulnerable populations of the region.

Dr Kluge defined six strategic directions based on the Sustainable Development Goals and WHO's global priorities:

- Develop a roadmap for the Region's future to better health.
- Ensure health security in the face of emergencies and other threats to health.
- Empower people and increase health behaviour insights.
- Support health transformation at all levels of health systems.
- Leverage strategic partnerships for better health.
- Take the Regional Office towards further excellence.

"In recent months, I have been fortunate to visit each and every country in the European Region, listening to the concerns and problems facing patients, caregivers, health workers, ministers and presidents alike. No single person, no one country, can tackle all the health challenges they face alone. But if we combine our efforts to find practical, context-specific approaches, we can and will," said Dr Kluge.

The WHO's executive board also appointed Dr Matshidiso Moeti for a second term as regional director for Africa.

Source: [WHO](#)

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