

Parma Youth Declaration 2010



Preamble

We, the young people participating at the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, Parma Italy 10-12 March 2010, have, as our main concern, the future of our health and the lives of future generations. Our declaration underlines the measure of our concern about the impact the environment has upon our health. Outcomes of the decisions taken at this conference will be our inheritance so we commit ourselves to following its outcomes and calling our policy makers to account for their actions. Through our network we will build strong structures throughout the region and dedicate ourselves to work with our Governments and Partners in the implementation of good policy and to challenge those policies that are weak and where we see slow progress in implementation.

Youth Participation

1.0 Our participation in the planning and implementation of environment and health policy and strategy is not negotiable. Neither is our health nor access to a clean and safe environment. We look forward to the continuation and strengthening of our participation in the new structure of the European Environment and Health Committee.

1.1 All policy sectors must work together in creating policy which is robust and sustainable, remembering the health and wellbeing of future generations.

1.2 Through our transparent and democratic network we will be part of local, regional and national meetings and strengthen our role in international meetings.

Education

2.0 The role of education in understanding the need to protect and sustain our environment is essential. Environmental education has to be an integral part of every child and young person's life, both through formal and non-formal curriculum. Education does not end when we leave school.

2.1 Education about how to create and live in a healthy, safe and sustainable environment needs to be on the agendas of governmental, non governmental and international organisations.

Protecting children's health through the CEHAPE Regional Priority Goals.

RPG 1 Ensure safe water and sanitation.

3.0 Access to clean water is the most basic human need. In some parts of the region we still find homes and schools without clean running water. This is a gross inequality. We expect technologies to be used to improve access to water, conserve water use and enhance sanitation. We urge Governments to work with us in finding solutions to the impact of climate change on our future water supply and to the use of science and technology to support our efforts.

RPG 2 Ensure protection from injuries and adequate physical activity (obesity, mobility, injuries and urban green spaces.)

3.1 Obesity is a risk to our health, active life and life expectancy. Tackling obesity requires a multidisciplinary approach including education, lifestyles and living conditions. We call upon our governments to work with us to establish programmes that help us provide safe and healthy nutrition, effective education and physical activity.

3.2 Injuries are the greatest killer of children in Europe. We believe this is an unacceptable factor in our environment it is therefore imperative that member states create safer daily living conditions for children throughout Europe. The most effective way to achieve this is consultation with us and combined education, training and enforcement strategies.

RPG 3 Ensure clean outdoor and indoor air.

3.3 As children and young people we are more sensitive to both indoor and out door air pollutants such as tobacco, industrial and transport emissions . Nine out of ten of people living in urban areas are subject to unsafe levels of out door air pollution. We expect more far reaching international action and collaboration to fix this problem.

3.4 Banning smoking in public places has to be a pan European policy. Non smokers have the right to live in a smoke free environment, especially children and young people.

RPG 4 Ensure a chemical and biological risk free environment

3.5 We do not know the risks that many new technologies, including Genetically Modified Organisms and Nano-technologies pose to our health and environment. It is imperative that independent expert research is undertaken and publically published before these technologies are put to use.

3.6 We congratulate countries that have removed asbestos from all products and materials and expect those who have not, to have done so by 2015.

3.7 Canada has banned the use of Bisphenol A in baby bottles due to health concerns. We strongly feel that member states should follow their lead.

Climate Change

4.0 We believe that dangerous aspects of climate change pose one of the most significant long term health threats to the people of Europe. Therefore, we propose limiting green house gas emissions to prevent a 1.5°C average temperature increase on post development temperatures. Funds need to be provided to ensure that less developed states meet this goal. Moreover, we see the need for the adaptation of health systems responding to emergent problems posed by climate change.

4.1 We note with mounting frustration the inability of states to negotiate a real solution to climate change and expect our member states to act responsibly. Furthermore, climate change has links to other important issues including green taxation and deforestation.

The Future

5.0 We welcome the collaboration that has been set up between our network, The World Health Organisation, The European Commission, Governments and Other Bodies. We shall continue to provide the youth perspective and ideas on environment and health issues in Europe.

5.1 We will build on the foundations as set out in section 6 of the 2010 Parma Declaration which states that: “We will ensure that youth participation is facilitated across all member states at both national and international level by providing them with assistance, resources and training required for meaningful and sustainable involvement in all aspects of the process.” We look forward to the realization of this clause, ensuring our organisation will participate at the highest and widest level possible in the environment and health process. Moreover, we will work closely with Ministries of Health and Ministries of Environment to develop collaborative and meaningful participatory partnerships at all levels, assisting them to fulfill this commitment to youth participation.

Signed

12th of March 2010

WHO CEHAPE Youth Network Representative

For and on behalf of the WHO CEHAPE

Youth Network

N.B. All evidence from Children's health and environment. A baseline assessment 2007 ENHIS