



## **REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

### **MINISTER OF HEALTH**

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#### **LETTER OF INTENT**

#### **NOMINATION FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**DEAR SIR REGIONAL DIRECTOR,**

On behalf of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Bulgaria, I have the honor to submit the candidature of my country for the Executive Board.

Since the creation of the World Health Organisation Bulgaria, being among the first countries to join it in 1948, has fervently supported the Organisation as a leading authority in international health. The WHO ultimate goal - the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible standard of health, unites efforts in various fields, with the overarching role of the health sector at global, regional and national level. The most cherished value of human beings is health. We believe that WHO makes a difference in global health, through collaboration with all Member-States. Bulgaria is strongly committed to be part of these endeavours as a stable, reliable and resourceful partner. A potential representation in the EB for us is an opportunity to contribute with national capacity and expertise for the implementation of WHO global and regional policies.

Bulgarian support for WHO strategic goals and governance can be demonstrated through diverse activities from the grassroots level on everyday health concerns to the highest political engagement of its Government. The last several years my country has shown firm will to put health high on its political agenda, hosting various international health fora, organizing high-level ministerial meetings, actively participating in the whole spectrum of sessions of the WHO governing bodies – Executive Board, World Health Assemblies and Regional Committees.

Bulgaria has strongly endorsed the Regional Office activities for technical support and practical guidance and tools with the aim to achieve all the health-related SDGs that have Universal Health Coverage at its core, providing the operational framework for their implementation.

This is evident in the new Biennial Collaborative Agreement 2020-2021 which sets the venue for further intensive collaboration between Bulgaria and WHO Regional Office for Europe in the light of GPW 13 based on national priorities and challenges, yet fully aligned with Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.



We strongly support and will contribute to the implementation of the Regional Office initiatives for grasping new opportunities, anticipating and managing trends and threats for reconciliation of the increased health expenditure with limited economic growth. We consider that successive steps should be undertaken to bring disease prevention and action on the determinants of health to the forefront of the national policy. We believe that the citizens' engagement in the development of the national health policies aimed at improving the health and well-being of society is of crucial importance.

We resolutely support the transformation initiatives to put health in all policies in place and create enabling conditions for people to live healthy lives. We are determined to get actively involved in the development of joint initiatives raising health literacy and empowering people in health policy developments.

In addition, going beyond regional limitations, WHO as a global health leader has to boost its support in monitoring, early warning and contriving measures to tackle cross-border health threats as they arise. Although infectious diseases levels in Europe have fallen or remain stable in recent years, the outbreaks of Ebola virus in 2014, Zika in 2016, and Coronavirus 2019-nCov indicate that new infections may occur at any time and need an adequate and timely response. Further actions are required to strengthen national capacity of the countries for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery using an all-hazards, all-health and intersectoral approach in accordance with the capacity requirements of the International Health Regulations to answer global challenges in a sustainable manner.

Antimicrobial resistance, as a growing public health problem, also calls for an ample level of preparedness and response. Another important issue becoming critical for guaranteeing Universal Health Coverage is "Equity, social determinants, gender equality and human rights" and a robust input in this area will address barriers to accessing quality health services across the continuum.

These are but a few priorities, which our candidate, if elected, will further advocate in order to make substantial progress at global level and I kindly ask you to consider the candidature of Prof. Dr. Petko Salchev for a member of the Executive Board.

Prof. Dr. Petko Salchev, who currently holds the position of Governor of the National Health Insurance Fund, has extensive long-term national and international experience in the field of health.

The last 30 years, Prof. Salchev has been working in the field of Public Health, Health Policy, Health Economics and Health Epidemiology. Occupying various positions in our healthcare system - from General Practitioner, Assistant, Chief Assistant, Professor in Social Medicine and Health Management and Head of Health Management Department, he has proven his broad expertise in health research and teaching through training of undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students. Since 2011 he has been a researcher at the Institute of Economic Research of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and has participated in several projects on health assessment, regional inequalities and demographic challenges.

He has demonstrated his competences at senior level as Director of the Regional Center for Public Health, Director of one of the largest university hospitals in the country - "Queen Joanna" University Multidisciplinary Hospital for Active Treatment, Deputy Executive Director of the Medical Supervision Executive Agency and Deputy Minister of Health during the reform of our healthcare system. Prof. Salchev has actively participated in the introduction



of new forms of health system financing, development of methodology for diagnostic-related groups and introduction of methods for Health Technologies Assessment (HTA).

Prof. Salchev was involved in the negotiation process of Bulgaria for EU accession and the complete alignment of the Bulgarian legislation to the EU acquis. He has made a significant contribution to the development of the National Health Strategies in the period 2000-2020, as well as to the evaluation of their implementation in the annual reports on Bulgarian citizens' health status. In the 2002-2005 reform period, Prof. Salchev was one of the authors of the Health Act, the Transplantation Act and the Blood and Transfusion Act. At international level, Prof. Salchev is a member of the HTA Network to the EC and of the working groups on health systems assessment. He is the Bulgarian focal point for primary care and for coordinated and long-term care. He is also the WHO National Focal Point on Integrated People-Centered Health Services.

Prof. Salchev has been involved in many international projects in the field of public health - Health Insurance, Long-Term Care Investments in Public Health, HTA, to mention few.

He has numerous publications on Social Medicine, Health Management, Health Policy, Investments in Health, as well as the Assessment of Healthcare System Risks.

The last 20 years he has been an authority in the public health sector in Bulgaria with major interests in Public Health, Health Policy, Health Management, Health Economics, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Health Technology Assessment. His broad and diverse international experience as a coordinator, consultant and researcher will additionally facilitate his tribute as a member of EB. He will strive to find workable solutions not only in the priority areas already mentioned, but also for every case posing a health challenge on broader scale.

It is my firm belief that Bulgaria nominates a highly motivated candidate who has the experience, competence and potential to contribute significantly to the work of the Executive Board and make a difference for the Organization and its achievements.

Dear Dr. Kluge, proposing this solid candidature, we are looking forward to an active, engaging and empowering collaboration in the future shaping more reliable responses in the health policy domain both for Europe and the world through "united action for better health".

Sincerely,

**KIRIL ANANIEV**

*Minister of Health of the Republic of Bulgaria*