



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ  
WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION  
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE  
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L'EUROPE  
REGIONALBÜRO FÜR EUROPA  
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Date: 29 May 2020

CIRCULAR LETTER TO ALL MEMBER  
STATES IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION

Dear Sir or Madam,

Considering the persisting uncertainty regarding the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in the WHO European Region and the possible continuation of travel restrictions and physical distancing measures, it is commonly agreed that conditions for holding the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe are not optimal.

Therefore, following consultations with the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Twenty-seventh Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) and with senior officials of the Ministry of Health of Israel, I have proposed that the hosting of the Regional Committee in Tel Aviv, Israel, be postponed to 2021 and that the 70th session of the Regional Committee (RC70) be held at UN City, in Copenhagen, Denmark, hosted by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, in order to minimize risks and costs under these exceptional circumstances.

This proposal received the full support of the Twenty-seventh SCRC at its fourth session, which took place in virtual format on 15 May, and which was open to all Member States in the European Region.

However, since the decisions to hold RC70 in Tel Aviv and RC71 in Copenhagen were taken by the Regional Committee in resolutions EUR/RC68/R8 and EUR/RC69/R10, changing these locations would require a formal decision by all Member States before the start of RC70.

In addition, since it can be expected that responding to the pandemic will still be a high priority for Member States at the time of RC70, it would be opportune to consider shortening the meeting and focusing the agenda on programmatic items required to ensure governance continuity as well as strategic issues to orient the work of the Regional Office in the years to come. Given the uncertainty, it would also be opportune to immediately make a provision for a virtual session in September 2020 in case a meeting in person is not feasible. This assessment will be made by the SCRC at a date closer to the meeting.

As requested by the Twenty-seventh SCRC at its fourth session, I am inviting all Member States of the European Region to consider the draft decision enclosed, as well as the following written silence procedure for its adoption.

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The specific rules for adoption of the proposed decision through a written silence procedure are:

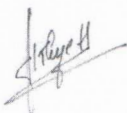
- a) Only Member States that wish to formally object to the proposed written silence procedure and the draft decision are required to reply to this Circular Letter in writing and by the date set below.
- b) If a majority of Member States formally objects in writing by the set date, the proposed written silence procedure and draft decision will be considered as having been rejected by the Regional Committee.
- c) In the absence of receipt by the set date of written objections from a majority of Member States, the proposed written silence procedure and draft decision will be considered as having been validly adopted by the Regional Committee. The adopted decision will be referred to the Regional Committee at its 70th session for information only.

The written silence procedure takes effect immediately and ends **not later than 24:00 CEST on 12 June 2020**.

I will communicate the outcome of the written silence procedure to all Member States as soon as possible after the indicated deadline. The date of the communication to that effect will be the date of the adoption of the decision.

I thank you for your understanding that under these exceptional circumstances this is the best possible way to ensure governance continuity. Meanwhile, let me reassure you of the full support of the Regional Office to your endeavours to continuously strive for the better health of your population.

Yours very truly,



Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge  
Regional Director

**Enclosures:**

Draft decision: Dates and places of regular sessions of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in 2020–2021.