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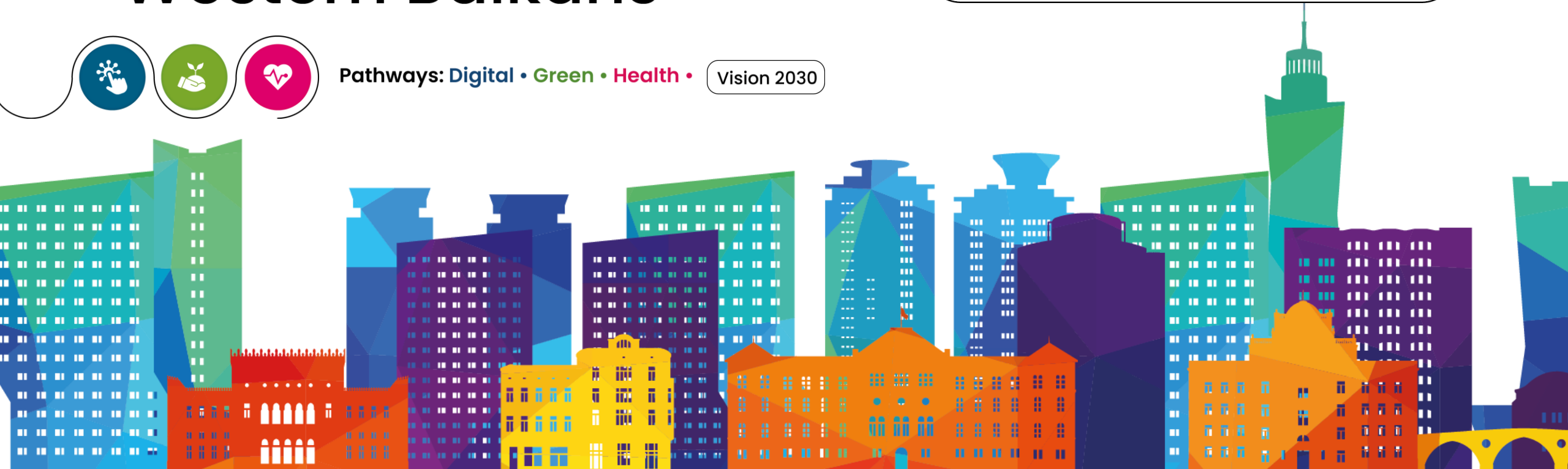
# Policy Dialogue on Aligning Priorities in the Western Balkans



Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
13 September 2023



Pathways: Digital • Green • Health • Vision 2030



POLICY ANSWERS is funded by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe project "R&I policy making, implementation and support in the Western Balkans", Grant Agreement N° 10105887.

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# *Overview of the Western Balkans Region on its Pathway towards Modern Health Policy*

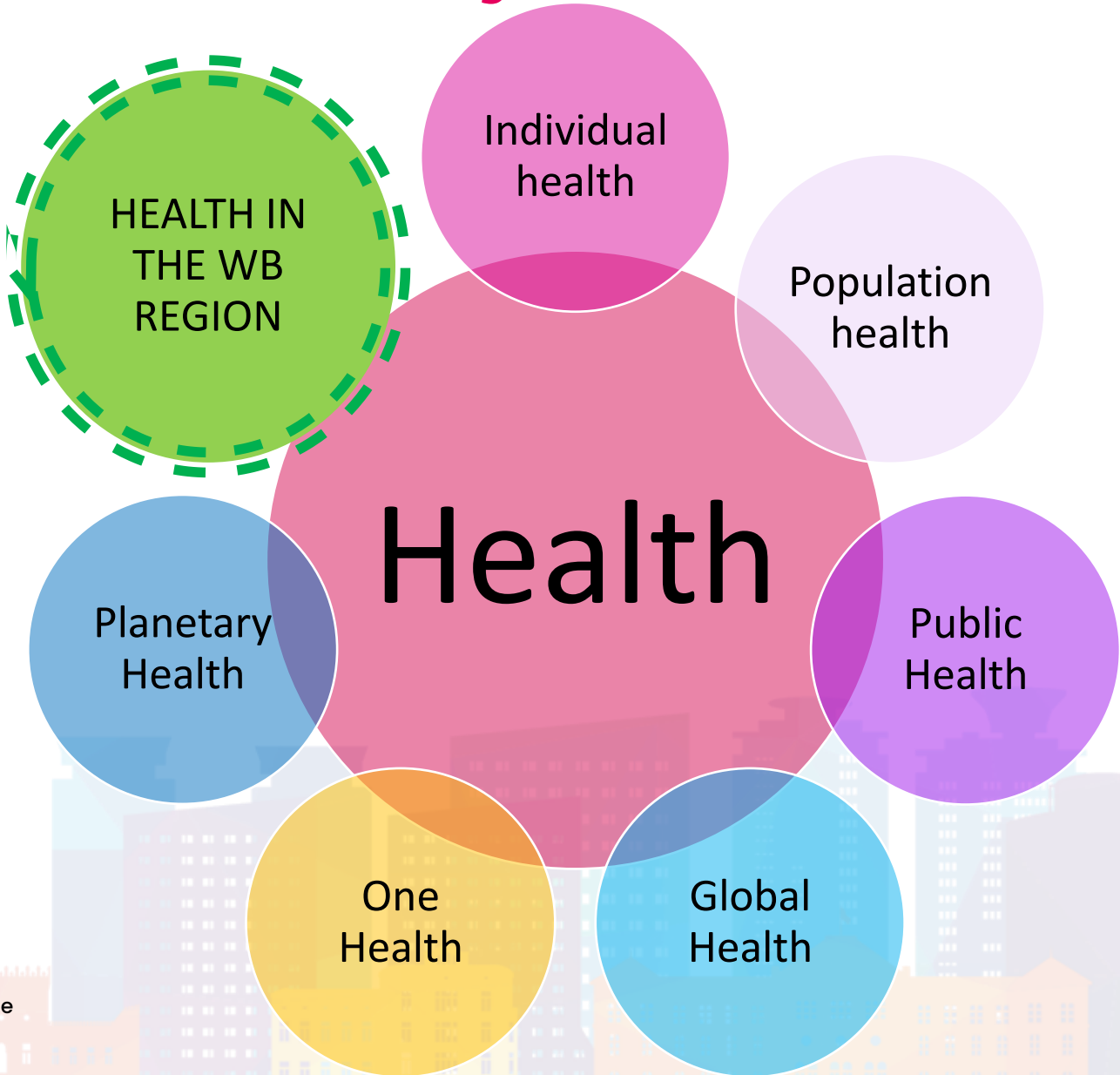
*Marija Jevtic, MD PhD*

## Health



# Modern Health Policy

Health



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# RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES, STRATEGIES, ACTIONS:

- International organisations (WHO, OECD...)
- Ministries of Health
- Local communities
- Decision makers
- Citizens associations
- Other stakeholders
- ...
  
- WB economies ↔ EU

Challenges

Solutions

RISKS

DISEASES

HEALTH

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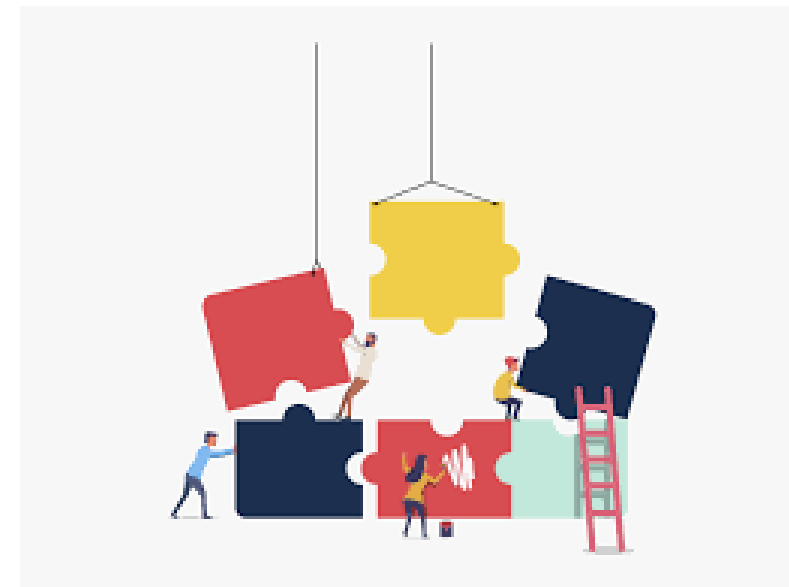
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## Modern Health Policy

# Modern Health Policy

## Western Balkan - anamnesis

- Population/demography decrease
  - Mobility
  - Financial situation
  - Social uncertainty
  - ...
- 
- Noncommunicable diseases increase  
(diabetes, CVD, malignant diseases, depresia...)
  - Infectious diseases increase (COVID 19 lessons learned)...
  - Ageing population
  - ...



# Modern Health Policy

## Western Balkan - anamnesis

### Health FRAME

- Health status of population
- Healthcare systems
- Primary healthcare
- Satisfaction of patients
- Satisfaction of workforce
- Education process
- ...



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## Western Balkan - anamnesis

### Environment related Health risks

- Climate change and Health
- Air pollution and Health
- Water quality and health risks
- Food production and health
- ...



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# Modern Health Policy

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## „Health in all Policies“



## „Health for all Policies“

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OECD Development Pathways

## Multi-dimensional Review of the Western Balkans

FROM ANALYSIS TO ACTION



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## Policy recommendations

Improve the co-ordination and effectiveness of social services, such as elderly care, **health care**, education and others, for better user outcomes.



OECD Development Pathways



## Multi-dimensional Review of the Western Balkans

FROM ANALYSIS TO ACTION



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A strategic effort to radically reduce air pollution by phasing-out these sources would make the region healthier and more attractive.

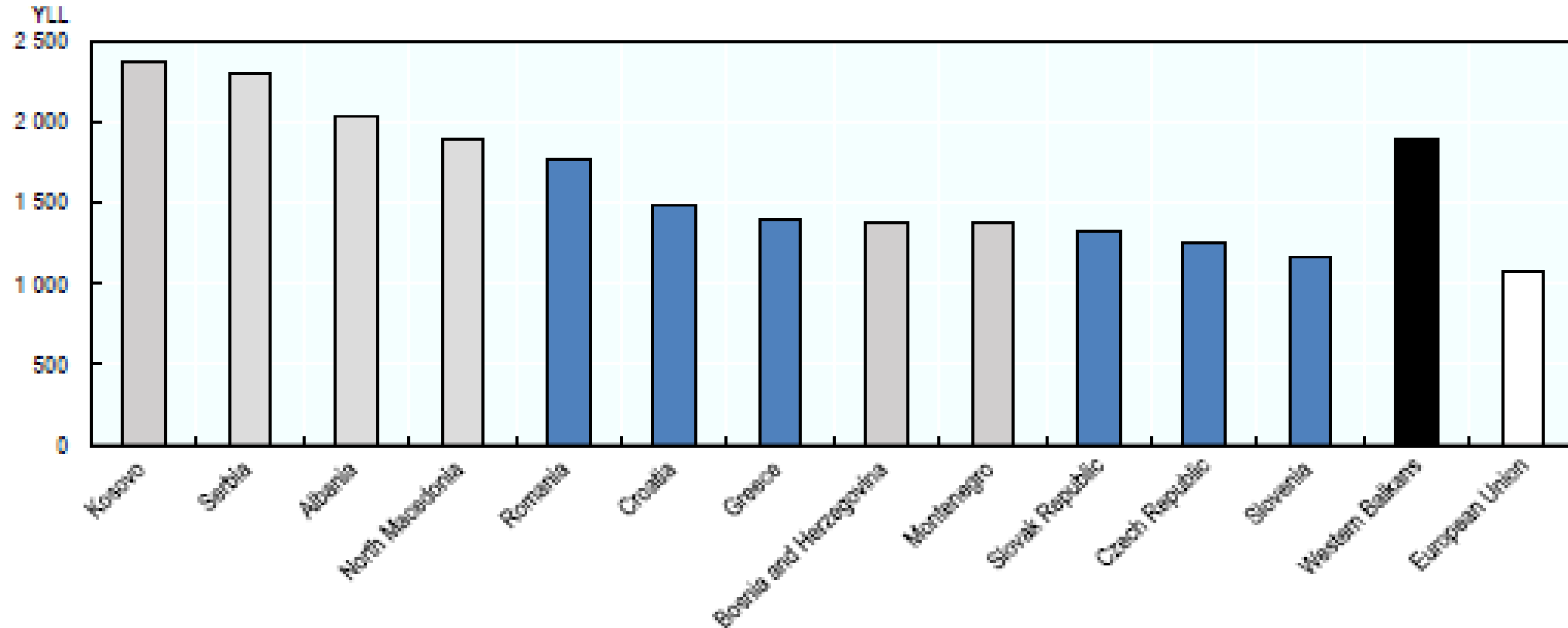
Across the Western Balkan region, **local governments are key to the implementation** and delivery of many government programmes and services (e.g. education, **healthcare**, social assistance, and water and waste services). *Often, however, they do not fulfil their roles.*



# Air pollution in Western Balkan economies has important health impacts

Years of life lost (YLL) per 100 000 inhabitants attributable to exposure to PM2.5 pollution, 2016

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Source: European Environment Agency (2020[38]), Air quality in Europe: 2020 report. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/air-quality-in-europe-2020-report>.

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# ROADMAP FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS (2021–2025): SUMMARY

European Programme of Work (2020–2025) – “United Action for Better Health”

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Roadmap for Health and Well-being in the Western Balkans (2021–2025): Summary: European Programme of Work (2020–2025) – “United Action for Better Health” Document number: WHO/EURO:2021-3437-43196-60510

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- The Roadmap for Health and Well-being in the Western Balkans (2021–2025):
  - establishes an innovative and customized strategic framework that centres country/area\* - level health goals and priorities, and targets investment into critical areas of health systems across the subregion (the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Serbia, and Kosovo\* - Western Balkans).



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## The Roadmap identifies:

- **health and sustainable development priorities for each country/area in the subregion**, supported by country/area-specific analytical briefs and evidence;
- **10 High Impact Action Areas and 17 Reform Initiatives for subregional synergistic action.**



### Political Objective

**Health is a political choice: An investment in development and growth**

Integrate efforts of countries/area and partners on core health priorities



### Investment Objective

**Increase investments in health by countries/area and partners**

Synergize resource mobilization by countries/area and partners



### Technical Objective

**Develop the critical points of health systems**

Implement health initiatives to close the WB's health gap with the EU

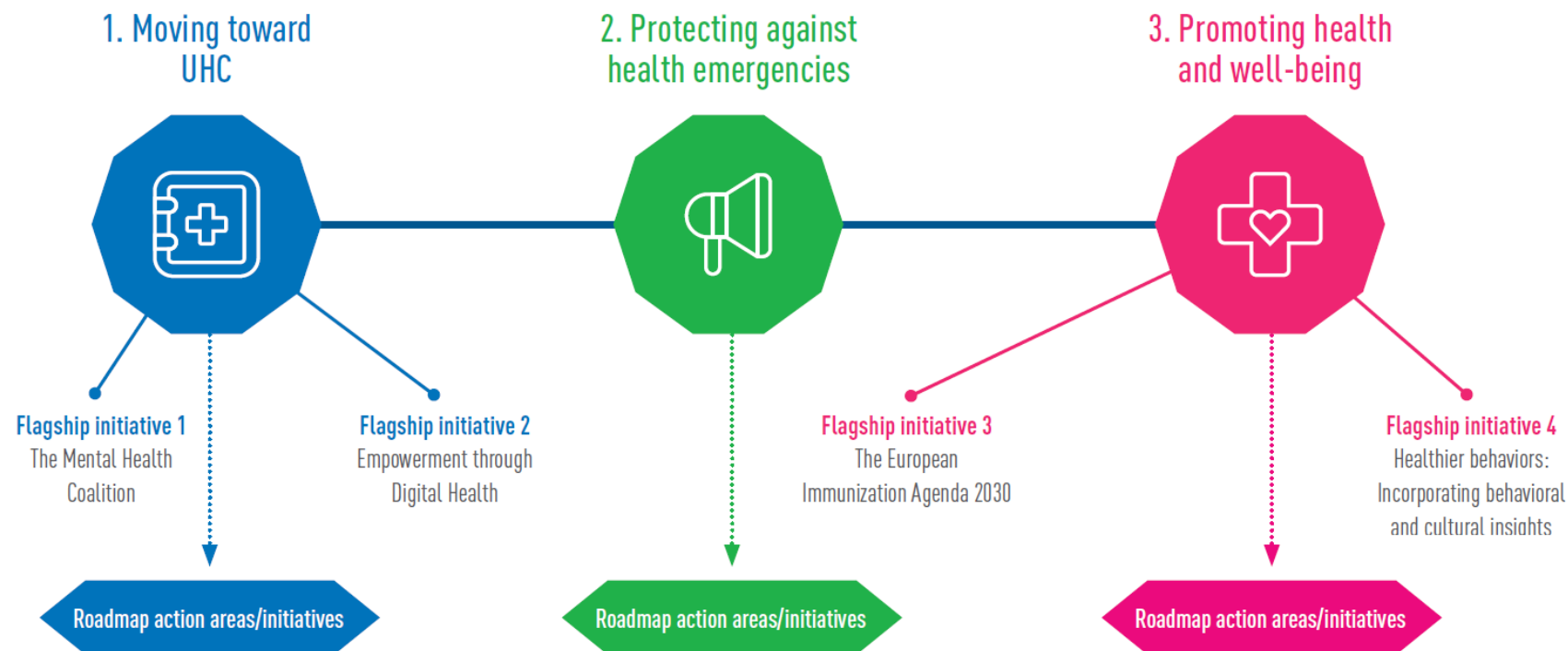
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## THE ROADMAP'S 10 HIGH IMPACT ACTION AREAS



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# THE ROADMAP'S 10 HIGH IMPACT ACTION AREAS

ACT FOR IMPACT: Reforming Health Systems in WBs to close the health gap between the WBs and the EU High Impact Action Areas and Reform Initiatives

1. INCREASE RESILIENCE TO HEALTH EMERGENCIES
2. ENSURE FINANCIAL PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO MEDICINES
3. STRENGTHEN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
4. SAFEGUARD QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE AND PATIENT SAFETY
5. PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

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# THE ROADMAP'S 10 HIGH IMPACT ACTION AREAS

ACT FOR IMPACT: Reforming Health Systems in WBs to close the health gap between the WBs and the EU High Impact Action Areas and Reform Initiatives

6. PRESERVE HUMAN CAPITAL FOR HEALTH
7. COMBAT AVOIDABLE NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES
8. CREATE HEALTHY AND GREEN ENVIRONMENTS
9. EXTEND VACCINATION BENEFITS ACROSS LIFE COURSE
10. COMBAT ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

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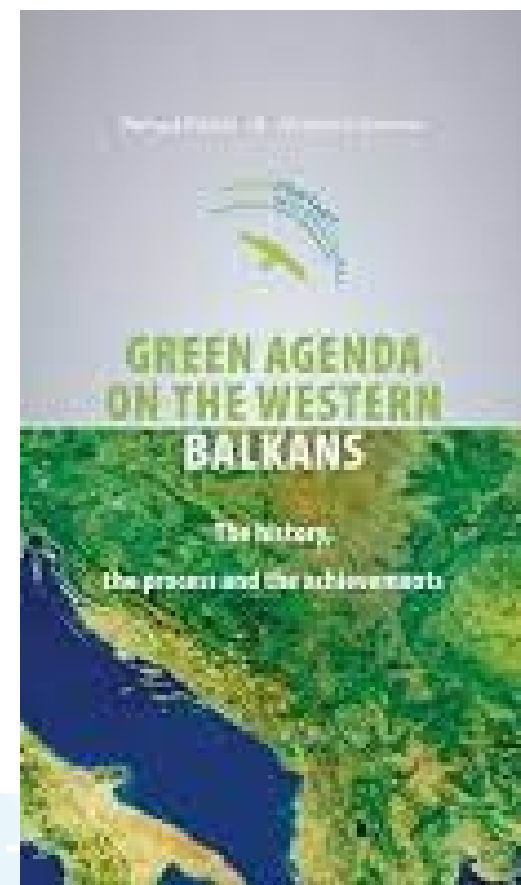
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- ❑ Building on the individual health goals and priorities of the WBs through the lens of the European Programme of Work (2020–2025) – “United Action for Better Health” (EPW), **the Roadmap identifies shared priorities and potential synergistic actions within and across the subregion.**
- ❑ It aims to **align efforts and foster cooperation with regional, subregional and country/area partners** to pursue political, investment and technical objectives that deliver on the core priorities of the EPW to **target the root causes of ill health and key weaknesses of health systems.**
- ❑ The Roadmap presents a **cornerstone for health progress** over the next five years by helping to accelerate progress towards EPW implementation, **achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and European Union (EU) accession.**



- ❑ The Roadmap is intended to function as a mechanism to re-build the economies of the WBs and promote an environment in which people thrive in their communities and have their health needs met.
- ❑ Synergizing for Health in the Western Balkans  
Global Commitments United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Regional Commitments WHO European Program of Work Roadmap for Health and Well-being in the Western Balkans (2021–2025) European Union **Enlargement Western Balkan Investment Plan Western Balkans Development and Health Goals**



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- ❑ In the WBs, the WHO Regional Office for Europe is focused on **individuals, communities and partnerships for solidarity to close the health gap with the EU.**
- ❑ Now is the optimal time for political action and investment to facilitate **cross-border collaboration** and technical advice that will benefit the entire subregion: **as the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically shown, we need to work together – now more than ever – and there is ample political capital to do so.**



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- ❑ Health is inherently linked to the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- ❑ Action is urgently needed to address the widening health and sustainable development gaps between the WBs and the EU, which place countries increasingly at risk of rescinding the progress they made before the COVID-19 pandemic.



# SERBIA CREATES OPPORTUNITIES



NEW BIOECONOMY HUB IN EUROPE



Ideas  
Examples  
Activities

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## The Mission of the SEEIIST Project



Create Regional Center of Scientific Excellence with 'first class research'

- ❖ To promote collaboration between science, technology and industry (technology transfer)
- ❖ To provide platform for improved education of young scientists and engineers (knowledge transfer)
- ❖ To slow down brain drain or even to revert it
- ❖ Recover the great tradition in technology which SEE had in the past
- ❖ Foster cooperation between countries in the Region

The goals can only be achieved with a Large Scale Facility based on the latest technologies

# Health

## Ideas Examples Activities

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HELIANT is a software company focused on IT solutions for healthcare and well-being.

HELIANT is leader in the Western Balkan market.



# Ideas Examples Activities



Health information system used by more than 80% physicians in primary healthcare facilities in Serbia. Software in whose development years of work have been invested and of whose maintenance care is taken by numerous experts. Medical software with the European certificate. It meets all the criteria prescribed by the [Ministry of Health](#) and the National Health Insurance [Fund of the Republic of Serbia](#).

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## AHEAD



ACTION FOR HEALTH AND EQUITY  
ADDRESSING MEDICAL DESERTS

EU Level Research Brief

September 2022

## Ideas Examples Activities

Sign up for the  
Medical Desert Network

Medical Deserts Network



EU Health Policy Platform



Health Workforce Projects  
Cluster



- ❑ The project Action for Health and Equity: Addressing medical Deserts – or AHEAD – aims to reduce health inequalities by addressing the challenge of medical deserts and medical desertification in Europe.
- ❑ Their goal is to achieve better access to health services, especially in underserved areas, and more equitable access to sufficient, skilled and motivated health workers.
- ❑ They aim to do this by building knowledge encouraging (digital) innovation in health service delivery and applying a participatory approach to public health policymaking.

The AHEAD team consists of six organisations based in Italy, Moldova, the Netherlands, Romania and Serbia. Our organisations bring together decades of expertise in the field of health and health workforce policy, and experience in research, including participatory methodologies, communication and media, social accountability, civic participation and policy advice. We have a shared interest to investigate medical deserts in several Eastern European countries (Romania, Serbia and Moldova) as well as in several Western European countries (the Netherlands and Italy). And most importantly, we share a common vision to realise health for all.



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- ❑ The EU Office in BiH announced a €10-million project to strengthen preventive and primary healthcare in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ❑ The project is part of the European Union's ongoing support to the health sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina (implemented by Unicef, the World Health Organisation, and the World Bank).
- ❑ The *EU Support to Health Sector Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina* project focus on supporting reforms of primary healthcare and capacity building of the BiH health sector.
- ❑ It also contribute to the development of policies to scale up child health services with a focus on childhood immunisation, early childhood development services, nutrition and mental health.
- ❑ During the pandemic, the donor providing the largest amount of support to BiH has been the EU, giving more than €20 million for the procurement of high quality medical equipment, vaccines and cold chain equipment to store vaccines.

14/12/2022

EU launches €10-million project to strengthen healthcare in Bosnia and Herzegovina



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[Download \(3.7 MB\)](#)

## Overview

North Macedonia's health system provides a relatively comprehensive basic benefits package, with about 90% of the population being covered under the social health insurance scheme. Public spending on health has declined in recent years and is among the lowest in South-Eastern Europe. There is strong reliance on out-of-pocket payments which represent 42% of total health spending and are among the highest in South-Eastern Europe. Catastrophic health spending remains a problem, particularly for poorer households, and is largely driven by out-of-pocket payments for outpatient medicines.

The information system *Moj Termin* ('My Appointment') has greatly improved scheduling and waiting times for clinical appointments and diagnostic tests but legal and operational barriers continue to undermine its use in primary care settings.

North Macedonia was hit harder by the COVID-19 pandemic than many other countries, particularly during the second and third waves. Essential health services were disrupted, but e-health interventions were leveraged as part of the emergency response.

**Ideas  
Examples  
Activities**

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# HEALTH CARE REFORM IN KOSOVO

By: Aferdita Ademi Osmani, Dorjan Marušič, Ramadan Halimi, Robert Muharremi and Valentina Prevolnik Rupel

**Summary:** Kosovo has one of the youngest populations in Europe. The death rate is almost half of the European average, accompanied by a low life expectancy of 72 years for females and 68 years for males. It has launched wide-ranging and ambitious health care reforms built on the introduction of a mandatory health insurance system, reforming the functions of the Ministry of Health, establishing chambers of health care professionals and changing the organisational structure of the health system.

*Keywords: Health Care Reform, Health Insurance, Organisational Structure, Kosovo*

**Ideas  
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Activities**

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## Albania social briefing: Prospects of medical students and the healthcare system in Albania

Posted on August 7, 2023

Weekly Briefing, Vol. 64. No. 3 (AI) July 2023

Ideas  
Examples  
Activities

### Prospects of medical students and the healthcare system in Albania

- ❑ Every country, as every workplace and company, should create the appropriate conditions for people to stay and work.
- ❑ These Albanian doctors-to-be want to leave because they know too well by now that conditions for them to flourish and grow professionally are not met in their homeland. Instead of forcing medical students to stay, a dignified healthcare system should be built, so that they would want to stay and contribute to their country.
- ❑ Better living conditions, dignity, institutional protection, and some kind of assurance that they can have a decent life at home, could persuade medical students to stay in their homeland.

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For take away:



- ❑ The pursuit of HEALTH should unite us in the Western Balkan, with all its challenges.
- ❑ By using „health in all policies“, friendly and close communicating and collaborating through the action and research with digital and sustainable constituents we will achieve the goal - to being a part of EU.

Health



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***THANK YOU!***  
*Stay healthy...*

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