

European Network for Health-Promoting Schools Newsletter



EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR
HEALTH-PROMOTING
SCHOOLS
A healthy start for a healthy life

Welcome to the first newsletter of the [European Network for Health-Promoting Schools](#) – an initiative led by EuroHealthNet together with the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Region and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health, which also serves as the UNESCO Chair on Global Health & Education.

Our journey

Health-Promoting Schools: A rich history

Reviving one of the most active and effective networks in the WHO European Region

The health-promoting schools (HPS) concept dates back to the mid-1980s, drawing its inspiration from the [Ottawa Charter](#) for health promotion. This led to the creation of the European Network of Health-Promoting Schools in 1992, driven by a unique collaboration between the WHO, the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

The network developed into a strong driving force for HPS initiatives and programmes across the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region. In 2007, it evolved into the Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) network, with implementation and coordination supported by national HPS coordinators appointed by Ministries of Health or Education across the region.

While the SHE Network concluded its activities, the HPS agenda gained renewed momentum through the [Schools4Health project](#) and the [WHO/Europe Strategy](#) for Child and Adolescent Health and Well-being.



A healthy start for a healthy life

A new strategy for child and adolescent health and well-being places health-promoting schools in the spotlight

In October 2025, the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region adopted the new Strategy for Child and Adolescent Health and Well-being, '[A healthy start for a healthy life](#)', at the 75th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe. The strategy was jointly developed by WHO/Europe and UNICEF ECARO (Europe and Central Asia Regional Office). Over the next 5 years, the strategy seeks to advance the implementation of the HPS approach as one of four key gateways to achieve comprehensive child and adolescent health policies.

In a [statement](#) presented at the Regional Committee, EuroHealthNet endorsed the strategy, highlighting the value of scaling up the HPS model, in view of its coordinating role of the [Schools4Health project](#). The WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health and UNESCO Chair Global Health and Education, also a partner in the project, contributed to providing the evidence base for this strategy through this [article](#), shedding light on the importance of an intersectoral approach to schooling.



Putting strategy into practice

Ministries of Health and Education from the WHO European Region come together for the launch of the new European Network for Health-Promoting Schools

On 26th February 2026, 42 National Focal Points from both Ministries joined the [European Network for Health-Promoting Schools \(ENHPS\)](#), together with key experts in the field. This marked the renewed commitment to the HPS movement, where countries shared their experiences and challenges, as well as opportunities for further cooperation. A [second meeting](#) was organised to discuss topics integral to HPS implementation – including advocacy and national networks, as well as to shed light on key updates, notably the establishment of a new Secretariat.

The Secretariat is hosted by WHO/Europe, supported by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Education and Health (also the UNESCO Chair Global Health and Education) and EuroHealthNet. Primarily, the Secretariat will help create the governance structure for the European Network, facilitate online exchanges and communicate the latest developments, in support of the WHO Member State chairing the network. An expert group is also being established to provide technical input and practical insights.

The ENHPS Secretariat can be reached via eurohps@who.int.



Network spotlights

Save the date for our first in-person meeting in Portugal

On 9-10 December 2026, the Directorate of Health Services in Portugal has kindly agreed to host the first in-person ENHPS meeting, for the WHO/Europe National Focal Points from the Ministries of Health and Education. If you are a National Focal Point, we kindly ask to respond to this [short survey](#) at the earliest convenience to support us with the planning.

Country spotlights

Ministries of Health and Education organised 3rd conference on the importance of networks and community for Health-Promoting Schools in Spain

Held on 1 June 2026, the conference brought together representatives from regional governments and other ministries, professionals from the education and healthcare sectors, as well as international organisations, including WHO/Europe. The objective was to exchange best practices and promote the creation of the Spanish Network of Health-Promoting Schools – a network of regional networks.

Currently, seven autonomous communities have active regional networks: Andalusia, Aragon, the Canary Islands, Castile and León, Extremadura, Navarre, and Murcia, reaching approximately 1,500 educational centres. Other autonomous communities are in the process of reactivating, developing, or establishing their regional networks.

The Working Group on Health-Promoting Schools - comprising representatives from the autonomous communities, other ministries, and academic and

technical experts, and coordinated by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports - is driving the development of the Spanish Network, as outlined in the interministerial agreement in force until 2028. The network aims to facilitate the exchange of experiences, establish common criteria for membership, and recognise the work of educational centres. Within this framework, the Ministry of Education is developing a quality label aligned with national guidelines.

The event included practical workshops focused on capacity building and implementation of the model, consolidating this conference as a key forum for advancing towards healthier and more equitable educational environments. More information is available in the [press release](#), together with the programme on the Ministry's [website](#) and the streaming [link](#).



Do you have relevant/inspiring news to share with us?

Please send your updates to g.sutton@eurohealthnet.eu for our next newsletter.

Upcoming events

- European Network for Health-Promoting Schools – Expert meeting – 9 September, online
- Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU: [Ireland's EU Presidency Conference on Online Safety for Children and Young People](#) – 10-11 September, Dublin (Ireland)
- European Network for Health-Promoting Schools – National Focal Points meeting – 9-10 December, Lisbon (Portugal)