

**On the margins of the 79th
World Health Assembly**

**CLIMATE CHANGE,
HEALTH AND CITIES**

**From global
commitments to
local impact**

The role of cities in
advancing climate
action and health

20 May 2026
18:00–19:15 CEST
Villa Rigot



Context

Cities are central to delivering the objectives of the [Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health](#). Urban areas concentrate populations, infrastructure, services, and economic activity, and are on the front line of climate impacts. At the same time, cities are uniquely positioned to act as engines of solutions. They co-create and contribute to positive health and climate outcomes, through shaping policies, piloting innovation, generating data and evidence. Locally grounded practices can inform national and global action to scale up.

Cities are also best placed to operationalize whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches at the local level. They routinely work across sectors, engage local communities, and implement policies that address social and environmental determinants of health. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience deliver tangible benefits for both people and the planet.

Given the interconnected nature of climate related risks across human, animal, and environmental systems, integrating a One Health approach further underscores the importance of including cities in global climate–health governance.

Despite this central role, cities remain under-represented in multilateral debates on climate change and health, including within WHA processes that shape global and national policy directions. To bridge the gap between global policy and local implementation, specialized networks and platforms such as the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, the C40 and the Global Cities Hub serve as essential intermediaries to support cities in translating the Global Action Plan into measurable and localized action on climate and health.

Objectives of the event

- Strengthen the engagement of cities within the WHA, through existing city networks, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to debates traditionally led by States.
- Demonstrate cities' contribution to the implementation of the [Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health](#), and encourage states to involve cities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of national climate and health strategies.
- Provide a platform for cities to articulate key policy messages on climate change and health, drawing on concrete local experience and evidence.

Agenda

Opening remarks

- WHO representative

Panel discussion

- Sir Andrew Haines – Chief Scientific Advisor of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health
- H.E. Ms. Deike Potzel – Perm. Obs. of the European Union
- H.E. Mr. Elmer José Germán Gonzalo Schialer Salcedo – Perm. Rep. of Peru (tbc)
- Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald – City of Cork, Ireland
- Dr. Pınar Okyay – İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Türkiye

Moderated by Anh Thu Duong – co-director, Global Cities Hub

Interactive exchange

Closing remarks