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Comments by the European Commission on the 2021 Joint Statements

- **“Climate and health education in Europe”, led by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER).**

These comments represent the view of DG SANTE, DG CLIMA and the European environment agency.

First of all, we would like to stress how timely this joint Statement is.

The EU’s key goal of becoming climate neutral by 2050 will deliver direct and near-term health benefits as a result of the switch to clean energy sources and to a decarbonised economy. However, even if we stopped all greenhouse gas emissions today, climate change will occur and will accelerate throughout this century.

Robust projections indicate an increasingly negative balance of the effects of climate change on our health and significant strains on our health systems caused by growing heat stress, emerging infectious disease threats, food and water safety and security problems, the rise of new allergens, mental health effects, wildfire and flood risks.

Launched in February 2021, the European Climate and Health Observatory allows policy- and decision-makers to visualise climate change related health risks and helps them to take action in responding to these risks.

The initiative, led by DG SANTE, DG CLIMA and European Environment Agency (EEA), involves partners such as the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the Copernicus Climate Change Service and the Lancet Countdown.

The EU and Member States’ national administrations, as well as sub-national authorities, can benefit from pooling and exchanging knowledge and solutions across borders, and from the close collaboration and cooperation. The Observatory helps provide the necessary preconditions and instruments for addressing climate change related health risks, creating synergies with other ongoing initiatives and facilitating the implementation of more comprehensive and more efficient measures.

The Joint Statement lead by ASPHER has been the first successful attempt to involve the stakeholder community around this topic with the aim at creating synergy with existing policies. In particular:

- The Joint Statement is well-substantiated and timely, clearly stating the urgency for action in both adaptation and mitigation of climate change in the health sector, with the focus on education and training.
- It provides a clear emphasis on the need to integrate climate change and the one health concept into the education and training of health professionals.
- Raising awareness among the health professionals about climate change impacts on human health emerges as an important objective for the European Climate and Health Observatory.
- The overall emphasis on 'health for all' and equity aspects is very much in line with the principles of the EU climate policy framework and the approach taken by the European Climate and Health Observatory.
- We found the list of supporting organisations impressive and we like the emphasis on training and education on 'climate health' for public health and healthcare professionals, and the concrete actions proposed in this respect.
- We very much hope that the finalisation of the Joint Statement is the beginning of a new way of working on training and education of professionals and we hope that this collaboration will continue and create synergy with the European climate and Health Observatory.
- Finally, we would like to congratulate and thank ASPHER and all organisations participating in the drafting/endorsement of the Joint Statement