

WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

66th Session

Copenhagen, Denmark, 12-15 September 2016

Agenda item 5 (e) – Policy and technical topics

Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region

The fight against B-Hepatitis is based on vaccination; treatment of C-Hepatitis is rather more complex.

While endorsing the Action Plan, We underline the need to liaise with the new initiatives on innovative medicines, keeping their cost under control, thus ensuring financial sustainability and move from the current restrictive protocols providing lifesaving treatment only to serious and advanced cases.

We need to make C-Hepatitis treatment available to all, irrespective of their classification, as treatment is the key action to stop viral circulation and eradicate it.

We also underline the need to address co-infections as well as the sometimes persisting risk factors.

Medicines treat the disease, but do not prevent further reinfections should risk factors and behaviours remain unaddressed.

We have currently over 60.000 patients under treatment and a specific fund has been reserved by Minister's initiative to reach out another estimated 60.000 eligible individuals.

We emphasize the opportunity to build the economic case in support of extensive and universal treatment, preventing criminal fake drugs' trade and illicit reselling of drugs of uncertain origin, getting into our countries via new smuggling routes.

We are alarmed not only by the reported several hundreds of patients already under possibly fake treatment but mainly by the almost inevitable drug resistance being introduced in the Region unless countries collaborate collectively in combating actively against smuggling and unregulated market and urge the EURO Office to promote enforced regulations with other Regional Offices and globally.