

Evelin Ilves, who is currently on a working visit to the headquarters of the European region of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Copenhagen, has accepted the proposal made by the Regional Director of the organisation, Zsuzsanna Jakab, to become health spokesperson in the sphere of noncommunicable diseases.

"We need the support of governments and parliaments to prevent non-infectious diseases, but on the other hand – and this is probably the most important – we need a wide-based understanding in society, and the understanding of each and every individual about what we can and should do for the sake of our own health," told Evelin Ilves at the meeting with the Regional Director of WHO Europe, Zsuzsanna Jakab.

"This is what WHO will provide – an opportunity to move in these two directions: by both influencing national policies and shaping social attitude that will support health and healthy lifestyles," Evelin Ilves stated.

Noncommunicable diseases involve cardio-vascular diseases, diabetes, malign tumours, chronic respiratory diseases and injuries that largely result from unhealthy eating habits, too little exercise, smoking and abuse of alcohol.

Last December at the invitation of WHO, Evelin Ilves gave one of the opening addresses in Turkmenistan, at the WHO European Ministerial Conference on the Prevention and Control Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020. Representative from 53 member states of WHO's European region focused on three key issues in Asghabat – what are the connections between noncommunicable diseases and economic development, how to put an end to the consumption of tobacco in Europe and how to make the most of the opportunities offered by health systems for the purposes of the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases.

"When abuse of alcohol and other lifestyle diseases are accounted for as one of the main reasons for mortality in a country, this should be seen as evidence of a failed social policy. Let us consider our countries and our citizens," said Evelin Ilves, who invited people, governments and manufactures to control the spread of noncommunicable diseases as social diseases. In the European Union member states, noncommunicable diseases represent the first and foremost cause of death (see <http://bit.ly/1hW1VRR>).

At today's working visit to the headquarters of WHO European region, Evelin Ilves will learn more about the efforts of the organisation to prevent the spread of noncommunicable diseases. As the spokesperson of the WHO European region in the sphere of noncommunicable diseases, Evelin Ilves will help people to acknowledge the various risk factors of noncommunicable diseases as well as efficient tools to anticipate and prevent such diseases, by taking part in conferences and discussions organised by WHO to focus on these issues.

Evelin Ilves is being accompanied to Copenhagen by the Head of WHO Estonia, Marge Reinap, and the Director of the National Institute for Health Development, Dr. Maris Jesse.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229