

CEI-WHO Task Force in response to COVID-19 emergency

Pandemic fatigue – reinvigorating the public to prevent COVID-19

Webinar November 25, 2020 (10:00 – 11:30 a.m. CET)

I. Background

The Central European Initiative (CEI) is a regional intergovernmental forum of 17 Member States committed to supporting European integration and sustainable development through cooperation between and among its Member States and with the European Union, international and regional organisations as well as with other public or private institutions and non-governmental organisations. The CEI targets capacity building and best-practice transfer from institutions in CEI-EU countries to benefit recipients in non-EU CEI Member States, amongst other strategic goals.

In early May 2020, the CEI and WHO Regional Office for Europe joined efforts by setting up a Task Force composed of key officials from CEI Member States to respond to COVID-19. The Task Force provides a platform for the timely exchange of information and coordination in the CEI-wide region.

Earlier this year, the WHO Regional Office for Europe set up a Behavioural and Cultural Insights Unit. This organized a meeting on 5 October with Member States from the WHO European Region to discuss the way in which pandemic fatigue might be affecting the COVID-19 response. The CEI Task Force on COVID-19 wishes to organize a webinar on this topic to further explore this relevance of pandemic fatigue in relation to the CEI Member States. The webinar targets government officials from the 17 CEI Member States.

II. Pandemic fatigue in relation to COVID-19

Despite generally high adherence and support to pandemic response strategies in populations across the Region, Member States are reporting increasing levels of pandemic fatigue in their citizens. In response to a request for guidance in this area, the Regional Office produced a framework with policy considerations to counter pandemic fatigue, reinvigorate public support and maintain protection behaviours.

The pandemic fatigue framework defines pandemic fatigue as demotivation to follow recommended protective behaviours, emerging gradually over time and affected by a number of emotions, experiences and perceptions. Pandemic fatigue is an expected and natural response to a prolonged public health crisis – not least because the severity and scale of the COVID-19 pandemic have called for the implementation of invasive

measures with unprecedented impacts on the daily lives of everyone, including those who have not been directly affected by the virus itself.

The framework proposes four key strategies, five cross-cutting principles, and a list of concrete actions for governments to maintain and reinvigorate public support for protective behaviours. The specific objectives of this webinar will be to:

- describe pandemic fatigue, how it manifests and why it occurs;
- present a WHO framework and considerations on reinvigorating public support;
- share lessons learned between countries; and
- share case examples between countries of effective ways to counter pandemic fatigue.

III. Agenda

The webinar will take place on November 25, from 10:00h-11:30h (CET).

Table 1. Webinar agenda

10:00-10:10	Introduction to the topic and panellists	<p>Gian Matteo Apuzzo Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat</p> <p>Snezhana Chichevalieva WHO Europe Focal Point for CEI</p>
10:10-10:25	Pandemic fatigue – reinvigorating the public to prevent COVID-19	<p>Nils Fietje Research Officer Behavioural and Cultural Insights WHO Regional Office for Europe</p>
10:25-10:40	Informing and inspiring – finding creative ways to engage people with COVID-19 health messages	<p>Cristiana Salvi (TBC) Programme Manager External Relations Health Emergencies WHO Regional Office for Europe</p>
10:40-10:55	National campaigns and initiatives to address pandemic fatigue and to promote the empowerment of the population: experiences from two countries	<p>Tina Bregant State Secretary, Ministry of Health Slovenia</p> <p>Mircela Tirdea Head of Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policies Division, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection Moldova</p>
10:55-11:30	Discussion: comments and experiences from Member States Wrap-up and conclusions	Moderated by Gian Matteo Apuzzo

References

Pandemic fatigue – reinvigorating the public to prevent COVID-19. Policy framework for supporting pandemic prevention and management. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2020. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/335820/WHO-EURO-2020-1160-40906-55390-eng.pdf>

Habersaat, K.B., Betsch, C., Danchin, M. et al. Ten considerations for effectively managing the COVID-19 transition. *Nat Hum Behav* 4, 677–687 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0906-x>

Napier, A., Depledge, M., Knipper, M. et al. Culture matters: using a cultural contexts of health approach to enhance policy-making. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2017. 10.13140/RG.2.2.17532.74881. https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/334269/14780_World-Health-Organisation_Context-of-Health_TEXT-AW-WEB.pdf?ua=1