

World Health Organisation – Headquarters – Geneva

11th September 2019

Attendees:

Audrey Guerre, Coordinator Live DMA

Marc Wohlrabe, Board member Live DMA

Shelly Chadha, Technical Officer, Prevention of Deafness and Hearing Loss, WHO

Kaloyan Kamenov, Consultant, Department for the Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, Injury and Violence Prevention, WHO

Karen Reyes, Consultant Hearing Programme, WHO

S.Chadha is in charge of the Hearing Programme of the World Health Organisation. The Hearing Programme includes 3 main missions worldwide:

- [Prevention](#)
- Facilitate access to hear care for people with hearing problems
- Raise awareness and advocate to members states
 - ➔ By elaborating strategies to prevent hearing loss
 - ➔ With technical tools to support governments: ex standards for devices, the WHO application, or the "[make listening safe](#)" publication.

About the guidelines:

Dr Jarosinska at WHO Regional Office for Europe (Copenhagen) has been dealing with the guidelines.

S.Chadha was not able to tell us why "leisure noise" activities were included in the guidelines, while it was not part of the initial request from the member states. She advised to ask Dr Jarosinska.

The guidelines are used as a basis for the tools. From the guidelines published in 2018, S.Chadha is in charge of giving standards for 2021. We do not know yet if and how these standards will be used by the Members States. The Member States' contacts of the WHO are the national referents ("attachés") in charge of health from the [United Nations \(UN\)](#), also based in Geneva, or some contacts at different Ministry of Health.

About the standards:

Some standards were already published for audio devices, you can [read them here](#).

The team that we met, is in the middle of the consultation phase for "promoting safe listening at entertainment venues". See concept note attached. Our solicitation was welcome and they seem ready to cooperate.

We had a 2 hours discussion to raise the main topics that we highlighted during our Working Groups and in the White Paper. S. Chadha summed-up two main areas of alertness:

- **Sound recommendations should not limit the wellbeing that music also procures**, and the artistic freedom/freedom of choice of people.
 - ➔ S.Chadha believes that it is the responsibility of the user to make choices. She seems in favor of preventive measures rather than strict sound limits. Ex: a sign showing to the audience the current sound level in the music venue, but also "chill rooms" (quiet zones) when building new music clubs.

- ➔ She paid a particular attention to the fact that governments can/did (ex from eastern EU countries) use environment laws to shut down venues/clubs because they just want to get rid of alternative venues in their city.
- **The impact of sound regulation on the live music sector**
 - ➔ S. Chadha is in a favor of progressive measure, which would apply differently between new construction of music venues and existing music venues.
 - ➔ We explained in detail the fragile economic situation of our members and the financial investment stricter sound regulations would require. We asked them to include financial support to the music venues when writing recommendations to the Members States.
 - ➔ If health is a public issue, then we required that the responsibility about the sound management is shared with the public authority to avoid fines or closures of music venues/clubs.

At the end of the conversation, S.Chadha suggested to “think practical challenges with a solution-based approach”. Let’s understand that they are expecting concrete ideas from us with proposals and positive solutions.

Next steps:

- The WHO team will run a series of “in depth interviews” and they asked us some contacts of club/venues managers, musicians/DJs, and sound engineers.
- Resource. We can use here some materials from our working group, as the overview of what works well, what does not work.
- Good practices.