

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION MEETING ON THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION IN ARMENIA

February 19, 2019
Yerevan, Armenia

The National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on the Protocol on Water and Health and Equitable Access to Water Supply and Sanitation in Armenia was *co-chaired* by Mr. Edgar Pirumyan, Head of the Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia, Ms. Nune Bakunts, Deputy Director of the “National Center for Disease Control and Prevention” SNCO of the Ministry of Health of Armenia and Mr. Franc Hakobyan, Deputy Chairman of the Water Committee of the Ministry of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources of Armenia.

The meeting was attended by 36 participants (18 female, 18 male participants) representing key national stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources, Ministry of Nature Protection (MNP), Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Basin Management Organizations, State Committee for Urban Development under the Government, Ombudsman’s Office, Statistical Committee, “Veolia Jur” closed joint stock company – water supply and sanitation service provider, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE) and the Association “For Sustainable Human Development”), European Union Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) national experts and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The meeting was organized by the UNECE with logistical support of the AWHHE NGO and with funding from the European Union within the framework of the European Union Water Initiative plus (EUWI+) for the Eastern Partnership programme.

The aim of the Consultation meeting was to update and discuss the revised targets set in the context of the UNECE/WHO - Europe Protocol on Water and Health and the analysis of the water legislative framework to identify the legislative barriers to ensure equitable access to water supply and sanitation. The meeting also provided an overview of the EUWI+ programme in Armenia and an update on the status of the development of a road map for legal harmonization with 5 EU Water Directives in Armenia under the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia.



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In the **opening session** welcoming remarks were made by Mr. Edgar Pirumyan, Ms. Nune Bakunts and Mr. Franc Hakobyan.

The status of activities in Armenia in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health was summarized. It was stated that although Armenia is not yet a Party to the Protocol, it has successfully implemented several projects, such as the “Target setting process under the Protocol on Water and Health in Armenia, 2013-2014”, “Assessing equitable access to water and sanitation in Armenia, 2016” and “Development of an equitable access action plan, 2017” projects. Furthermore, the role of the planned reforms in the water sector for sustainable management of water resources was underlined.

SESSION 1: UNECE/WHO EUROPE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH AND ITS APPLICATION IN ARMENIA

The **first session** was devoted to the linkages between the Protocol and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, and the implementation of the Protocol in Armenia. The session was chaired by the representative of the Ministry of Health, Ms. Nune Bakunts.

The first presentation was on the contribution of the Protocol to the achievement of the SDGs and outlook on future priorities under the Protocol, presented by Ms. Christine Kitzler, Environmental Affairs Officer, UNECE, followed by a presentation by Mr. Edgar Pirumyan, MNP on the status of the ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health by Armenia.

Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan, National Coordinator of the EUWI+ then presented an overview on the EUWI+ programme and activities supported by the programme, which was followed by another presentation made by the national expert Mr. Arsen Karapetyan on the “Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA): Recommended Actions for Implementation” under the EUWI+ programme in the context of harmonizing national legislation with 5 EU Water Directives.

In the following presentation the activities on the revision of targets in Armenia under the EUWI+ were presented. The results of the baseline analysis for setting national targets under the Protocol for different target areas, the process of setting draft targets, measures and indicators, prioritization of the target areas, were summarized by Ms. Emma Anakhasyan, national consultant, Ms. Nune Bakunts, MoH, Ms. Gayane Shahnazaryan, national consultant, Ms. Armine Arushanyan, Water Committee and Mr. Tigran Oganezov, national consultant.

The presentations were followed by a *Questions and Answers session*, during which several issues were discussed, including the main challenges regarding water resources availability and nature protection, sanitation and wastewater treatment, meeting the obligations under the CEPA and options to overcome them, as well as issues related to practical implementation of the action plan of the proposed roadmap.

The revised draft national targets and target dates under the Protocol were presented by Ms. Emma Anakhasyan, followed by a *discussion session*. An exchange of ideas on the most prioritized areas for target setting under the Protocol for the Republic of Armenia took place. It was decided that stakeholders would provide their input in written form within a 2 weeks deadline for the revision of the draft targets and actions to the EUWI+ experts.

SESSION 2: EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION IN ARMENIA

During the **second session** issues related to equitable access to water supply and sanitation in Armenia were discussed. The session was chaired by Mr. Franc Hakobyan, Water Committee.

An update on the work on equitable access to water supply and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health and beyond was provided by Ms. Christine Kitzler, Environmental Affairs Officer, UNECE.





Ms. Armine Arushanyan, Water Committee, then presented the progress in the implementation of the 2018-2020 Action Plan on equitable access to water supply and sanitation in Armenia, followed by a presentation by Mr. Tigran Oganezov on the analysis of the water legislative framework and identification of the legislative barriers to ensure equitable access to water supply and sanitation in Armenia.

The presentations were followed by a *policy discussion* focusing on the exchange of ideas on legislative barriers and legal amendments needed to ensure equitable access to water supply and sanitation. Moreover, issues related to sanitation, contamination of waters by mining tailings, lack of norms for assessing background status of rivers were raised.

In the **closing session** of the Meeting, based on the results of the presentations and follow-up discussions the following decisions were made by the National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting participants:

- *The National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting participants welcomed the presentations made and requested all key beneficiary institutions to submit written comments on the revised draft targets and actions to Ms. Emma Anakhasyan within 2 weeks.*
- *The National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting participants expressed their expectation that the experts under the EUWI+ will incorporate the comments from the stakeholder institutions and present the draft final version to the Ministry of Nature Protection for further circulation among stakeholders.*
- *The National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting participants requested that the final version of the draft targets and target dates will be officially adopted.*