



Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Tuesday, 19 November 2019

Programme

10:00 Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

Chair: Ms. Vesna Knjeginjic, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties

Musical introduction

Welcome address by Ms. Ana Brnabić, Prime Minister of Serbia

Video message of Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

Speech by Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Speech by Ms. Piroska Östlin, Regional Director a.i. of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe

Address by Ms. Regina De Dominicis, United Nations Resident Coordinator a.i for Serbia

10:45 High-level session: “The Protocol on Water and Health: catalysing sustainable development in the pan-European region”

Chair: Ms. Vesna Knjeginjic, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties

Moderator: Ms. Ivana Božović, Journalist at Radio Television of Serbia

10:45-11:05 Keynote speech

Will we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in pan-European region?

Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, Chief Executive Officer of Sanitation and Water for All, former Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation

11:05-12:30 High-level panel discussion

Panel 1: Responding to global changes and threats

Belarus: Ms. Natalya Zhukova, Deputy Minister of Health, Chief State Sanitarian

Montenegro: Mr. Kenan Hrapović, Minister of Health



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Romania: Mr. László Borbély, State Councillor of the Prime Minister on the topic of Sustainable Development

Serbia: Mr. Zlatibor Lončar, Minister of Health

Switzerland: Mr. Thomas Jemmi, Ambassador, Deputy-Director General, Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office

Responding expert: Ms. Nathalie Dörfliger, National Research Alliance for the Environment of France

Panel 2: Cooperating to ensure safe, sustainable and equitable water and sanitation services

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Mr. Hamdo Tinjak, Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations

Finland: Ms. Päivi Sillanaukee, Director General, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, WHO Executive Board member (2018-2021)

Hungary: Ms. Ildikó Horváth, Minister of State for Health, Ministry of Human Capacities

Netherlands: Mr. Jan Busstra, Director of the International Water and Marine Division, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management

Serbia: Mr. Goran Trivan, Minister of Environmental Protection

Tajikistan: Mr. Kamolzoda Mirhamuddin, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Population

Responding expert: Mr. Oliver Loebel, Secretary General, European Federation of National Associations of Water Services (EurEau)

12:30-13:00 Statements from the floor by high-level officials

15:00-15:15 Statements from the floor by high-level officials (cont.)

15:15-15:30 Conclusions

Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of the of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and Ms. Piroska Östlin, Regional Director a.i. of the WHO Regional Office for Europe



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Concept note of the High-level Session

The Protocol on Water and Health: catalysing sustainable development in the pan-European region

BACKGROUND

Water, sanitation and health are at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are key to successfully achieve its aspirations. The implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all), Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) and other water, sanitation and health-related targets can best be achieved in the pan-European region by taking full advantage of the Protocol on Water and Health.

Over the last twenty years, the Protocol has supported remarkable progress in water, sanitation, hygiene and health in the pan-European region, particularly with regards to providing access to basic drinking-water and sanitation services, improving drinking-water quality and reducing the occurrence of water-related disease incidents and outbreaks.

Nevertheless, a number of challenges persist and require further attention and action, such as gaps in ensuring safely managed and climate-resilient water and sanitation services, providing equitable access to water and sanitation services for all in all settings and addressing emerging health concerns related to the management of water and sanitation systems, such as legionella prevention and antimicrobial resistance.

The Protocol continuously contributes to addressing growing challenges and new threats, providing a regional policy home for jointly developing strategies and recommendations to respond to them. It contributes to tackling common issues, such as the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events induced by climate change, which can have major impacts for the performance of water and wastewater infrastructure and services and the availability and quality of water.

The Protocol plays a key role in advancing and operationalizing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in countries of the pan-European region. It offers a sound legal and institutional framework that promotes intersectoral and integrated approaches looking at the whole water cycle. It also provides a successful regional platform that supports countries in implementing and monitoring the water, sanitation, hygiene and health-related Sustainable Development Goals, building on its broad experience and valuable practical tools.

The Protocol serves as an effective framework to help countries mainstream water, sanitation, hygiene and health-related actions into existing sectoral strategies and policies, as well as to ensure alignment with other global and regional commitments, such as those contained in the Declaration of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Ostrava, Czechia, 13–15 June 2017) (Ostrava Declaration) and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions, including the 2019 resolution on water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities.

Background documents:

- *Protocol on Water and Health and the 2030 Agenda: A Practical Guide for Joint Implementation*¹
- *A Healthy Link: The Protocol on Water and Health and the Sustainable Development*²

¹ See <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52057>

² See <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44282>

SESSION OBJECTIVE

The high-level session will provide an opportunity to appraise progress and take stock of concrete results in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to water, sanitation, hygiene and health and to have an open dialogue on how to tackle the persisting gaps in the region and respond to the big picture challenges caused by environmental, social and economic changes.

The session will present concrete examples of initiatives that illustrate the role played by the Protocol on Water and Health in achieving such Sustainable Development Goals across countries and sectors, looking at both the political and technical dimensions.

The session will also reflect on the role of the Protocol in shaping the regional agenda on water, sanitation and health and thus achieving the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda and the 2017 Ostrava Declaration in the pan-European region.

SESSION FORMAT

The session will begin with a welcome address by high-level officials from the host country, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.

A keynote speech will set the scene by providing a landscape analysis of the water, sanitation and health situation in the pan-European region and outlining how the Protocol framework contributes to achieving the water, sanitation and health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

A panel composed of high-level representatives from countries and international and non-governmental organizations, interacting with responding experts, will then discuss a range of priority issues relevant to the water, sanitation, hygiene and health agenda in the pan-European region. Topics for discussion will include: (i) equitable access to safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene for all in all settings; (ii) sanitation challenges and wastewater reuse; (iii) climate change and water scarcity; (iv) antimicrobial resistance and legionella; (v) financing of water and sanitation services; and (vi) the value of international cooperation. Panelists will be invited to address these issues from the perspective of the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda and the role of the Protocol in the implementation of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals

Subsequently, Parties, other States and stakeholders will be invited to participate in an interactive moderated discussion on the above issues, through interventions from the floor. Priority will be given to high-level speakers (Ministers, Deputy Ministers, State Secretaries, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Agencies). Due to the limited time available, interventions and statements should not exceed three minutes. To facilitate the running of the high-level session, delegations planning to make a statement are invited to inform the secretariat in advance.