

Statement of Hungary on the implementation of the Protocol at the 2nd session of the Meeting of the Parties

The Republic of Hungary is one of the founders of and has been party to the Protocol on Water and Health for ten years from now. The order of the government in 2005, November, promulgating the Protocol charges the ministers of the health and the environment with providing for the implementation of it in Hungary. Further ministries concerned with tasks on the relevant areas for the Protocol, their professional advisory background institutions and several professional associations have been involved through inviting them by the chairman of the Interministerial Committee on Public Health (ICPH) or by the chairman of the Committee on Water and Health (CWH). It is the Committee on Water and Health that ensures the coordination on the working level.

The Committee ensures that the activities of various authorities, governmental and non-governmental organisations are co-ordinated and streamlined on areas relevant for the Protocol implementation. It covers among others cross-checking and – as far as possible – harmonising plans and targets with due attention to the protection of health and sustainable development and following-up and reporting on the implementation.

Since having been party to the Protocol, also by making use of the benefits of its EU-membership, Hungary could be successful in providing almost the whole population with centralised drinking water supply, and the development of sanitation has also been unprecedented. There has been significant progress in the integrated water management, too. There are however areas where further development is very much needed and the process of setting and periodically revising our targets are in the centre of the programme of development. Priority issues to be mentioned are the drinking water quality improvement programme, the programme on the protection of our water resources, and those for the remediation of contaminated sites, for adaptation to the climate change and for updating the health relevant arrangements in the man-made recreational water related services.

The Government of Hungary is devoted to an environmental and health policy that provides for the maximum possible protection of the citizens' health and of the environmental heritages by laying an enhanced emphasis on sustainability, with due involvement of the civil society in the decision-making. The Government acknowledges the Protocol on Water and Health as an important instrument the provisions and mechanisms of which present an excellent tool to successfully follow these targets. The Government is also devoted to provide all possible support to the bodies of the Protocol in charge of implementation on the international level and feels its obligation to take its maximum possible part from the international co-operation and solidarity.

As far as the implementation of the work programme for the years 2011-13 is concerned, Hungary is particularly interested in assisting the further development and Europe-wide distribution of the principles and practice of target setting and self evaluating as one of the most important toolkits of the Protocol. On the particular areas under the Protocol, Hungary is ready to ensure significant contribution to a harmonized progress in health and safety protection of the users of man-made water recreational establishments like pools and spas.

As a country recently hit by a dreadful industrial disaster, Hungary is ready to contribute in sharing the experiences and lessons of this event and calls for an enhanced alertness to save Europe from such emergencies and for higher attention to the issue of the environmental safety of similar industrial facilities and their climate resilience.

As a country long committed to the implementation of the Protocol, we wish a successful term to the new Chair and a significant progress for the Parties with the programme of work.