

High-level segment

Special Session on Equitable Access to Drinking Water and Sanitation

Dear Excellencies,

On behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would like to say that it is my great honour and pleasure to attend this very important Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

A large number of countries signatories to the Protocol reflects, among other things, its significance and importance in meeting one of the basic human rights—the right to water, which has special significance especially at a time of dynamic economic growth and social development.

Water, even though a very simple chemical substance, is a key element of human existence as well as of all other life on Earth. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country rich in water resources. According to the World Bank (WB), Bosnia and Herzegovina is the country with the largest quantities of drinking water in the region and seventh in Europe, and by water resources it is richer than many countries in the world. Aware that these resources are not limitless, we are firmly committed to working towards protection and sustainable use, as well as the establishment of access to drinking water for everyone in accordance with the provisions of the Protocol.

Bearing in mind that the key commitment of Bosnia and Herzegovina is its integration into the European Union, the reform and priorities in the water sector are focused on the implementation of European legislation. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a potential candidate for EU membership, assumed partially or completely all of the key objectives of the EU legislation in terms of water management, and incorporated them into its legal and strategic documents. Main challenges of BiH water management policies are related to proper implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, Directive on Drinking Water, Directive on the Treatment of Urban Waste Water and other Directives which allow integrated management of water resources. Through achieving and implementing the objectives of the mentioned directives, we will also achieve a large part of the main objectives of the Protocol itself.

Taking into account in particular the financial crisis that currently exists in the world and in our country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a small country in transition, without support, international cooperation and exchange of experiences with other countries is not able to implement the basic objectives of integrated water management. Therefore, the cooperation between the Protocol and other international conventions holds enormous significance for us.

Finally, I want to say that Bosnia and Herzegovina will give its full contribution to the realization of the goals and joint cooperation through the Protocol, and will contribute to the objectives of better access to safe drinking water and sanitation for as many people as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation so far and we are looking forward to our future cooperation.
Thank you!