

Freshwater Quality

Strategic workshop on future priorities under the
Protocol on Water and Health

Geneva, 7-8 March 2016



Rationale

What is the problem and emerging trends in the pan-European region?

- * Most of the freshwaters (surface and ground waters) are still not in „good quality”
- * Many information still missing - related to the state of quality, sources of pressures, impacts (on water quality and also on human health)
- * There is a lot of progress but more efforts are necessary to improve the general situation (more effective programs of measures, better implementation, more monitoring, stronger enforcement, co-operation, etc.)
- * The main sources of pollution: diffuse sources / point sources (ratio growing)
- * Urban/rural, industrial, agricultural origin – special tailor made measures are necessary
- * Special problems: e.g. effect of climate change (extreme droughts, floods, water scarcity, flash floods, etc.)

What is already happening?

- * Monitoring, impact assessment, information sharing – national and international level is not adequate
- * Integrated River Basin planning as a tool is more and more broadly used (e.g. based on EU water legislation)
- * International co-operation on planning is more and more important: transboundary and regional level (e.g. river basin district level)
- * On the basis of „environmental objectives” target setting, setting of Programs of Measures started/ongoing
- * Basic programs are mainly started / under implementation (e.g. waste water collection and treatment programs, drinking water supply programs),
but Implementation is generally not ambitious enough (e.g. lack of enough financial sources, lack of information)

Possible Protocol's contribution

Future common activity areas (examples):

- * Good practices on the protection of drinking water resources
- * Climate change effects - reuse of waste waters (health aspects and standards?)
- * Effective measures relating to the diffuse pollution (e.g. water quality and health problems caused by high level of nitrate concentration in waters)
- * Special chemical pollution caused by micro pollutants (including e.g. pharmaceuticals or other chemical substances harmful from the human health)
- * Others? What is the need of UNECE countries?

Other important co-operation areas:

- * Improving/helping information sharing, capacity building, regional workshops
- * Newer common guidelines (?)
- * Strengthening bilateral/regional co-operation (water and health)

Synergies with the activities of

- * UNECE “Transboundary Water Convention” (HU presidency supports!)
- * 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development
- * etc.