6TH MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION UNDER THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

24-25 March 2021
(10.00 am-1.00 pm CET on both days)
Virtual meeting

PROGRAMME

### Wednesday 24 March 2021 (10.00-13.00 CET)
**Focus:** Progress on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation

**Chair:** Ms. Béatrice Jedor, Ministry for Solidarity and Health, France

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30 CET</td>
<td><strong>Opening Session</strong></td>
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<td>• <em>Welcoming remarks by France and Hungary, Co-chairs of the Expert Group:</em></td>
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<td>- Ms. Joëlle Carmès, Deputy Director, General Directorate of Health, Ministry for Solidarity and Health, France</td>
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<td>- Mr. Tamás Pándics, Head, Department of Public Health Laboratories, National Public Health Centre, Hungary</td>
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<td>• <em>Welcoming remarks by UNECE:</em></td>
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<td>- Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Co-secretary of the Protocol on Water and Health, UNECE</td>
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<td>10:30-11:30 CET</td>
<td><strong>Session 1. Progress on ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Objective:</strong> The objective of this session is to share information regarding (i) the role and work of the Expert Group on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol, especially since the 5th meeting in June 2018; and (ii) progress made by individual countries since 2018, also in light of the COVID-19 situation.</td>
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<td>• Overview of the work of the Expert Group on equitable access under Protocol</td>
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<td>- Ms. Diane Guerrier, Joint secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health, UNECE</td>
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<td>• <em>Equitable self-assessment completed in 2019-2020: the experience of Belarus</em></td>
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<td>- Ms. Alena Drazdova, Deputy Director for Science, Republican Scientifical Practical Centre of Hygiene, Belarus</td>
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<td>• Actions taken and specific measures implemented in countries to address inequities in access to water and sanitation during the Covid-19 pandemics and recovery period Tour-de-Table</td>
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<td>11:30-11:40 CET</td>
<td><strong>Screen break</strong></td>
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Session 2. Related developments: the revised EU Drinking Water Directive and its equity dimension

Objective:
In December 2020, the European Parliament adopted the revised EU Drinking Water Directive which entered into force on 12 January 2021. The objective of this session is to learn about the main changes in the Directive with regards to equitable access to water and sanitation and their foreseen influence in EU and non-EU countries. The role of the Protocol on Water and Health will also be discussed.

- **The equity dimension in the revised EU Drinking Water Directive**
  - Mr. Michel Sponar, Deputy Head of Water Industry and Marine Environment Unit, DG Environment, European Commission

- **How does the Protocol on Water and Health support countries towards equity in the context of the EU Drinking Water Directive?**
  - Mr. Oliver Schmoll, Programme Manager, Water and Climate, WHO European Centre for Environment and Health

- **A utilities perspective on how to put into practice the equity dimension of the revised EU Drinking Water Directive**
  - Mr. Oliver Loebel, Secretary General, Federation of European Water Utilities (EurEau)

- **Challenges and opportunities in implementing the revised EU Drinking Water Directive equity dimension in EU countries and its influence in other countries—experience sharing from:**
  - Ms. Marta Vargha, Head of the Department of Hygienic Water Microbiology National Public Health Institute, Hungary
  - Ms. Natasa Dokovska, Program Director, NGO Journalist for Human Rights, North Macedonia

- **Questions and Answers**

**12:50-13.00 CET**
Closing of Day 1
Conclusions by the Chair
### Session 3. Ensuring affordability of water and sanitation services

**Objective:**
The programme of work of the Protocol for 2020-2022 foresees the development of a brochure on good practices to ensure affordability of water and sanitation services. The objective of this session is to establish the ground for the preparation of the brochure by (i) presenting the previous work on affordability carried out under the Protocol, and (ii) hear from other stakeholders on key issues to consider when it comes to affordability.

**Guiding questions:**
- What are the key issues around affordability of water and sanitation services?
- To what extent are affordability concerns being addressed?
- What examples of good practices would you like to highlight?
- What future work under the Protocol would be most useful to help ensure affordability of WASH services?

- **Affordability in the work on equitable access under the Protocol on Water and Health**
  Ms. Diane Guerrier, joint secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health, UNECE

- **Panel discussion on perspectives on affordability of water and sanitation services**
  **Moderator:** Mr. Roberto Martín Hurtado, consultant, UNECE

  - Mr. Rio Hada, Team Leader, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, OHCHR
  - Mr. Richard Johnston, Technical Officer, WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, WHO
  - Mr. Xavier Leflaive, Principal Administrator, Environment Directorate, OECD
  - Mr. Milo Fiasconaro, Executive Director, Aqua Publica (European association of public operators)

- **Discussion**

### 11:00-11:15 CET
**Screen break**
### Session 4: Development of a brochure on good practices in ensuring affordability of water and sanitation services.

**Objective:**
The objective of this session is to i) present an outline of the brochure on good practices to ensure affordability of water and sanitation services, ii) hear from countries about key issues and good practices to address affordability concerns from pan-European countries and iii) gather advice and input from Expert Group members for the further development of the brochure.

- **Draft outline of the brochure on ensuring affordability of water and sanitation services**
  Mr. Roberto Martín Hurtado, consultant, UNECE

- **Key issues and good practices in the pan-European region:**
  - Ms. Aude Ratinahirana, Water Policy Division, Ministry for the Ecological Transition, France
  - Ms. Diana Iskreva, NGO Earth Forever, Bulgaria
  - Ms. Armine Arushanyan, Water Committee, Armenia
  - Ms. Helena Costa, Water and Waste Services Regulation Authority (ERSAR), Portugal

- **General discussion about the content of the brochure**

- **Next steps to prepare the brochure**

### Conclusions of Day 2 and closing of meeting
- Ms. Marta Vargha, National Public Health Institute, Hungary
- Ms. Béatrice Jedor, Ministry for Solidary and Health, France
- Ms. Diane Guerrier, Joint secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health, UNECE