Public participation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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Protocol on Water and Health
Macedonia, in general, is lagging behind in the Aarhus Convention's and similarly with the Public Participation regarding the *Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health*.

Only as an illustration, Macedonia has not sent a report on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention for a long time, and from the 3 stables only the second one can be said to be implemented—**Access to information**, due to the obligation of the state to provide access to information even though has been misused recently and certain institutions require that information be collected.
2. Lessons learnt and challenges

* Regarding the Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health, the problem is that nobody implements it in its entirety, it has not been translated into the official language and there is no awareness of both the one side (the citizens) and the other (social stakeholders) about its need for implementation. One does not know - the other one does not like it.

* Macedonia is not still member of the UN Protocol (it is ongoing process)

* Macedonia is on the process of collecting the data for targeted indicators of SDG and is not still discusses about the reporting
The challenges in this guide are:

a) Awareness of the public’s rights and the authorities’ obligations – very low level of awareness

b) Appropriate regulatory framework or short time frames – non existing or non clear vision (in the frame of Ombudsman office only one person is responsible for environmental questions)

c) Access to information related to the decision-making process is formal.

d) Political will – is declarative and in practice it relates to the political interest, and not to the interest of the citizens.

e) Cross-sectoral cooperation - Cooperation between different ministries and institutions show difficulty (in Macedonia we have 3 ministries that are responsible for water and lot of independent institutions)

f) Funding - The potentially high cost of running complex or extensive public-participation procedures is an obstacle.
3. Plans for future work

* Translation of Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health
* Update the national legislation framework
* Training for stakeholders (water users, professionals, regulatory’s body) ombudsman’s staff, public as well NGO representatives and media (in three level – local level within municipalities, through 8 plans region and on national level)
* Promote on line data base with all information in the frame of access to participations (as tool for implementation)
* Exchange good and bed practises
* Open debate on SDG’s indicator data