



Hungarian National  
Public Health Institute

## 5<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION UNDER THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

26-27 June 2018

Ministry of Solidarities and Health  
14, Duquesne Avenue  
Paris, France

### INFORMATION NOTICE

#### I. Background and rationale

**The need to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation is progressively getting more and more visibility in global, regional and national agendas.**

At the global level, the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation were recognized in 2010. Also, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, includes targets specifically addressing equity: target 6.1 on universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, and target 6.2 on adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, with special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

At the regional level, in the pan-European region, the UNECE<sup>1</sup>-WHO/Europe<sup>2</sup> Protocol on Water and Health provides a sound framework for translating into practice the human rights to water and sanitation and for achieving SDG Goal 6 on water and sanitation. The Protocol requires its Parties to ensure access to water and sanitation for everyone, and specifically to promote equitable access to water and sanitation “for all members of the population, especially those who suffer a disadvantage or social exclusion”. In the European Union, the recent proposal for a revised drinking water directive includes in its proposed new Article 13 on access to water intended for human consumption an obligation to provide equitable access.

At national level, several countries are including the human rights to water and sanitation in their national legislation and taking concrete actions to tackle the challenges faced in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe

**Since 2011, the Protocol on Water and Health has developed tools and carried out a number of country-level activities to support countries in their efforts to improve equitable access to water and sanitation.**

The publication *No One Left Behind: Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region*<sup>3</sup> presents good practices and lessons learnt from throughout the pan-European region on the policies and measures to be enacted to provide equitable access.

An analytic tool, the *Equitable Access Score-card*<sup>4</sup> supports governments (at national, regional and municipal level) and other stakeholders to establish a baseline measure of the equity of access, identify priorities and discuss further actions to be taken to address equity gaps. It has already been applied in 11 countries of the pan-European region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, France – Paris Greater Area, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Spain – city of Castello, and Ukraine) and additional countries have expressed interest in applying it. Based on the outcomes of such assessments, a number of countries (Hungary, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Armenia, Serbia...) have taken concrete measures to improve the equity of access to water and sanitation services. In France, social pricing of water is subject to an experimental scheme provided by law and reported to the National Water Committee.

The publication *Guidance Note on the Development of Action Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation*<sup>5</sup>, so far used in 2 countries (Armenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), helps governments to take a structured approach to the identification and implementation of actions to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation.

**The Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation under the Protocol serves as a platform for countries and stakeholders from the region to exchange experiences.**

Countries in the pan-European region are at different stages of understanding the challenges faced to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation and of translating the human rights to water and sanitation into practice. In addition, experience from other regions can also provide inspiration for actions to address the equity gaps and in financing necessary measures to advance towards universal access.

Considering the broad experience gathered in countries of the pan-European region in understanding and addressing the challenges to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation, the Expert Group on Equitable Access, at its 4th meeting (Budapest, 13-14 September 2017), discussed the elaboration of a new publication that would capitalize the findings and lessons learned from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol.

## **II. Objectives**

The **overall objective** of the Expert Group meeting is to continue to support countries in their efforts to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation by providing a platform to exchange experiences in developing situational analyses, defining action plans and implementing concrete measures.

---

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [www.unece.org/env/water/publications/ece\\_mp.wh\\_6.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/ece_mp.wh_6.html)

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032)

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44284>

As in past meetings, this platform will also be used by Expert Group members and other stakeholders to present relevant experiences, tools and initiatives, such as new guidance documents and projects, and to report on progress in global and regional programmes related to equitable access to water and sanitation. This meeting of the Expert Group will also enable a deeper exchange of experiences with relevant organisations from the hosting country.

The **specific objectives** of the Expert Group Meeting are:

1. To exchange experiences and lessons learned from self-assessments of equitable access to water and sanitation in countries carried out since the previous Expert Group meeting, including the impacts of the self-assessments;
2. To exchange experiences and lessons learned from the development and implementation of Equitable Access Action Plans in countries, including process, outputs and impact;
3. To review the “country contributions on lessons learnt from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health” and provide further input;
4. To reflect on the discussions on the financing of equitable access to water and sanitation that took place at 4th meeting of the Expert Group and draw conclusions to be reflected in the publication under development and possible future work of the Expert Group;
5. To discuss the first draft of the publication “Capitalizing findings and lessons learnt from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health” and provide additional input for its development;
6. To exchange information on related topics, such as (i) implementation of targets 6.1 and 6.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and (ii) partners initiatives acting to promote the improvement of equitable access to water and sanitation;
7. To enable a deeper exchange of experiences with French organisations working on ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation, both in France and abroad.

### **III. Organization of work**

Plenary presentations will be combined with interactive working discussions to ensure an optimal sharing of experience. All participants will be encouraged to contribute actively to the discussions.

### **IV. Targeted participants**

Participation in the Expert Group meeting will be by invitation only. The meeting aims to gather about 30-35 participants.

Participants will include primarily country representatives from the pan-European region whose work (in the environment, education, health, social protection, finance and other sectors) is related to equitable access to water and sanitation. Representatives from countries that have been involved in equitable access self-assessment exercises or have expressed interest to engage in such exercise will particularly be invited to contribute.

It will also include representatives from development partners, international organizations, civil society organization and stakeholders engaged in the provision of water and sanitation services, including from French organisations working on ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation, both in France and abroad.

## **V. Partners**

The Expert Group meeting is organized by the UNECE secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health in cooperation with the French Ministry of Solidarities and Health and the Hungarian National Public Health Institute.

The meeting is hosted and funded by the French Ministry of Solidarities and Health.

## **VI. Background documentation**

The background documents for the Expert Group meeting are:

- No One Left Behind: Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region, available at:  
[www.unece.org/env/water/publications/ece\\_mp.wh\\_6.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/ece_mp.wh_6.html)
- The Equitable Access Score-card: supporting policy processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation, available at: [www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032)
- Guidance Note on the Development of Action Plans to Achieve Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation, available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44284>
- Annotated outline of draft publication Capitalizing findings and lessons learned from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation
- Information on activities on equitable access to water and sanitation carried out under the Protocol on Water and Health available at:  
[http://www.unece.org/env/water/pwh\\_work/equitable\\_access.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/pwh_work/equitable_access.html)
- Country contributions on lessons learnt from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation

## **VII. Practical information**

The Expert Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, 26 June and Wednesday, 27 June 2018. It will start at 9:00 a.m. on 26 June 2018.

The working languages will be English, with whispered interpretation in Russian.

All relevant documentation for the Expert Meeting will be made available in due course at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=46379>

A self-paid group dinner will be organized for the dinner on Tuesday, 26 June 2018.

### ***Venue***

The Expert Group meeting will take place in the premises of the Ministry of Solidarities and Health, 14, Duquesne Avenue, Paris (Room 3275R).

The Ministry is located near the Ecole Militaire metro station (metro line 8) and Saint-Francois-Xavier metro station (metro line 13).

Further information can be found in the following website:

<http://www.ratp.info/informer/anglais/index.php>.



### ***Registration***

Participants are requested to confirm their attendance at their earliest convenience and by **6 June 2018** at the latest. Please register online using the following link:

<https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=BIdfSz>

In case of difficulties please contact the secretariat by e-mail (cammile.marcelo@un.org).

### ***Financial support***

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the meeting. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat (cammile.marcelo@un.org) **as soon as possible, but no later than 10 May 2018**, using the financial support request form available on the meeting webpage. No application will be accepted after this deadline due to visa and travel arrangement regulations.

### ***Visa***

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. Since France is part of the Schengen area, visa applications may take 5 weeks. If you need a personal invitation letter for visa purpose, please indicate it clearly when registering online. Participants requiring a visa are therefore invited to register as soon as possible and start the visa application procedure **at least 5 weeks in advance**.