

# Improving equitable access to water and sanitation

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5th session

Meeting of the Parties to the  
Protocol on Water and Health

19-21 November | Belgrade | Serbia



# 1. Why is this work important for the pan-European region?

Programme area 6 on **equitable access to water and sanitation** to:

- Support the **implementation of the Protocol’s article 5** “Equitable access to water, adequate in terms both of quantity and of quality, should be provided for all members of the population, especially those who suffer a disadvantage or social exclusion”.
- Support the progressive realization of the **human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation**.
- Offer an opportunity for countries to enhance **cross-sectoral cooperation** to further address inequities in access to water and sanitation.
- Support implementation of **SDG targets 1.4, 4.A, 6.1, 6.2 and 11.1** and Parma Declaration on Environment and Health.



## 2. Major milestones since 2017 and outcomes (1)

**In-country activities undertaken to support the assessment of the situation of equity of access to water and sanitation in several countries.**

### **Main outcomes:**

- National self-assessments of equitable access to water and sanitation finalized in **Azerbaijan (2018)**, **Bulgaria (2018)**, **Serbia (2017)** and started in **Belarus (2019)**.
- **Action plans** on equitable access to water and sanitation endorsed in **Armenia** and **Serbia (2018)** and developed in **North Macedonia (2017)**
- Several countries implemented **concrete measures to improve the equity** of access at national level.
- Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Serbia and Ukraine applied the **equity lens** when **setting or revising targets** under the Protocol and in **relevant legislation and policy reforms**.



**FRANCE**

Equitable access action included in 2015-2019 National Plan on Health and Environment. New law adopted to improve affordability of water and sanitation services.

**SERBIA**

Action plans (2019-2021) to ensure equitable access in the regions of Sumadija and Pomoravlje endorsed by Inter-ministerial Body

**UKRAINE**

Amendments regarding sanitation incorporated into the final version of the Drinking Water Law.

**HUNGARY**

National Building Code amended to reflect minimum requirements and standards for access to water and sanitation in buildings

**REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

Plumbing systems built to supply safe drinking water 24 hours a day to 67,000 villagers in rural areas.

**PORTUGAL**

Affordability indicator included in the annual report of the water and sanitation regulator

**AZERBAIJAN**

Water supply established in 316 rural and urban secondary schools.

**NORTH MACEDONIA**

On-going improvement of facilities for menstrual hygiene management in cafés, bars and restaurants in Skopje in partnership with the professional union

**SPAIN**

7 public fountains installed in the city of Castelló to guarantee access to drinking water

**BULGARIA**

On-going development of a regulatory framework for sanitation in schools by recently established national Working Group under the Ministry of Health.

**ARMENIA**

National 2018-2020 Equitable Access Action Plan endorsed. On-going revision of Water Code to include definition of vulnerable and marginalized groups.



## Improving equitable access to water and sanitation

Selected measures taken to address gaps identified through equitable access self-assessments carried out in 2011–2019

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## 2. Major milestones since 2017 and outcomes (2)

Two meetings of the Expert group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation organized: 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in Budapest (September 2017) and 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in Paris (June 2018).

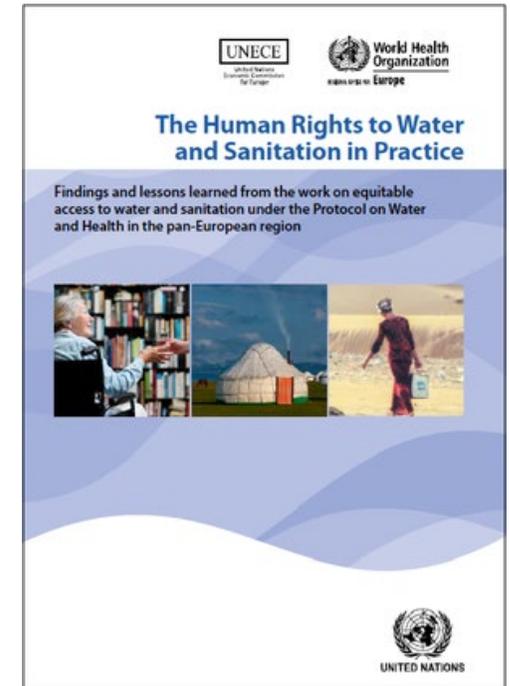
### Main outcomes:

- Community of practice - exchange on **self-assessment processes** (success factors/barriers) and **impacts** in countries (actions identified/implemented);
- Development of the **publication capitalizing on findings and lessons learnt from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation**
- Discussion on **the financing of equitable access to water and sanitation** and implementation of **SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2**



## 2. Major milestones since 2017 and outcomes (3)

- **New publication** *The Human Rights to Water and Sanitation in Practice: Findings and lessons learned from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health in the pan-European region* (November 2019)
- **Promotion** of tools and achievements of the **work on equitable access to water and sanitation** at several **international forums**:
  - Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Ostrava, Czechia, 13–15 June 2017);
  - 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (Brasília, 18–23 March 2018);
  - 24<sup>th</sup> World Water Week (Stockholm, 25–30 August 2019).



# 3. Challenges and lessons learnt for future work

## Lessons learnt:

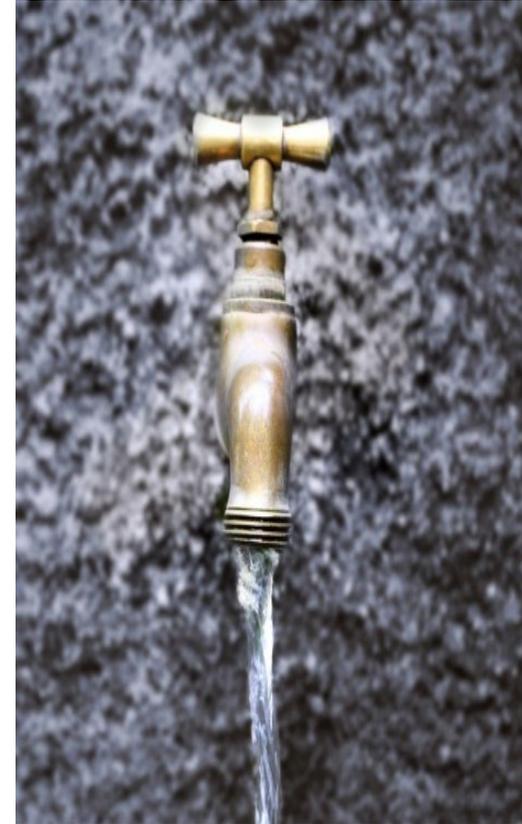
→ Equitable access self-assessments have enabled countries to:

- Raise awareness on inequities challenges and enhance cross-sectoral cooperation bringing together the human rights community, Ministries of education, justice, social protection, labour etc..
- Inform targets setting under the Protocol and adopt an a “equity lens” in decision-making.

## Challenges:

→ Mobilizing dedicated financing to address access gaps and improve equitable access to water and sanitation is challenging. A detailed understanding of access gaps can support informed decision making to prioritize interventions.

→ Expertise to further integrate equity issue in national legal documents is often lacking.



# Thank you for your attention



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