

Introducing the UNECE – WHO Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health

Alisher Mamadzhanov, UNECE



Virtual Workshop on designing legal
frameworks for transboundary water
cooperation

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About the Protocol






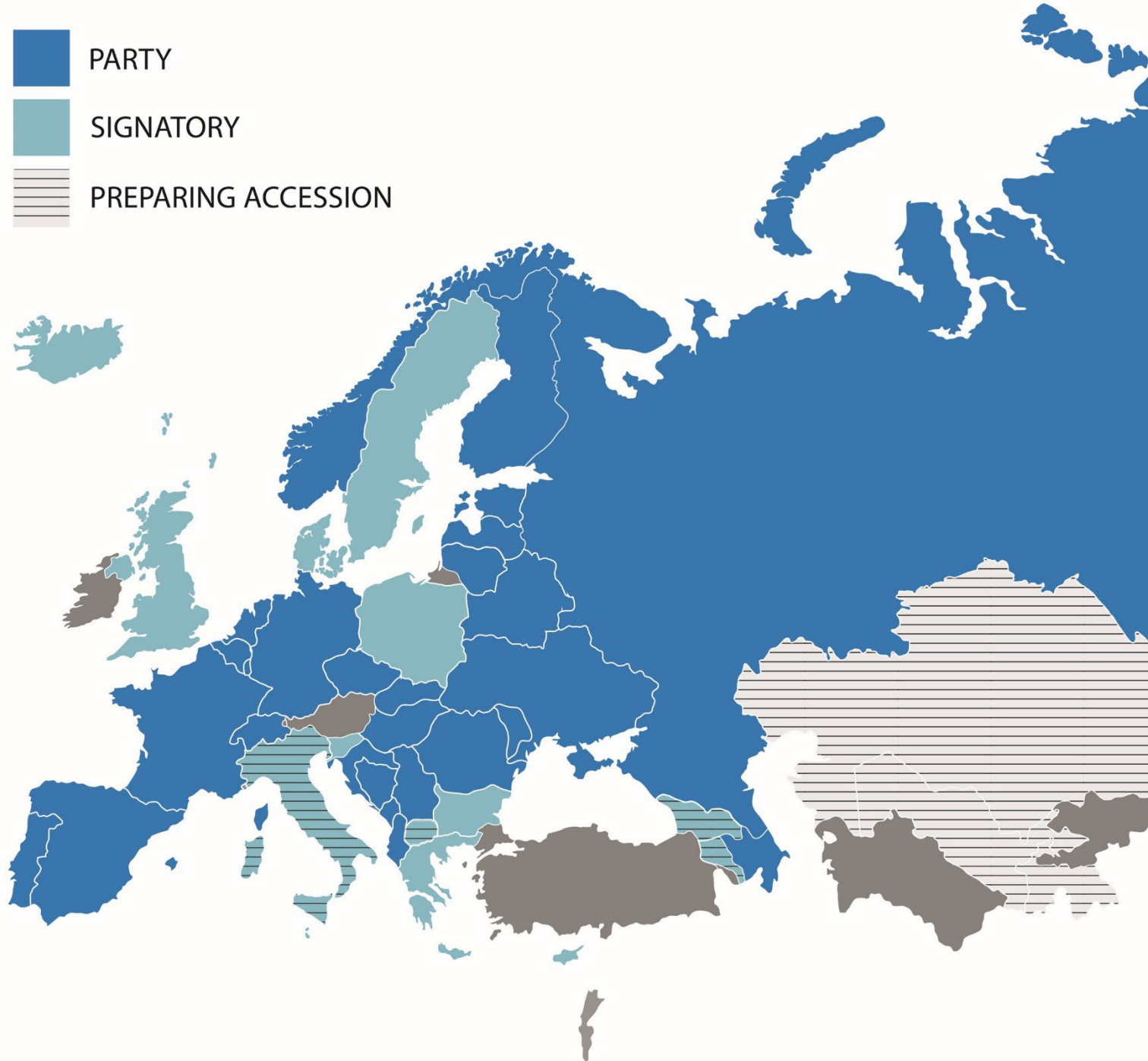
Legally-binding agreement aimed at **protecting human health and well-being** through sustainable water management and by reducing water-related diseases

Obligation to set targets to ensure **access to drinking water and sanitation** for everyone (special focus on equitable access)

27 countries are Parties to the Protocol

UNECE and WHO/Europe provide joint secretariat services

-  PARTY
-  SIGNATORY
-  PREPARING ACCESSION



Parties and States working within the Protocol framework

WASH and COVID-19

- Safe and sufficient water is key to protecting human health during infectious disease outbreaks
- Frequent and correct hand hygiene prevents COVID-19 infection
- Need for a continuous supply of safe water and sanitation systems that are operational, in all settings and under challenging conditions
- Need to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized
- Environmental surveillance in wastewater: early warning, and detection

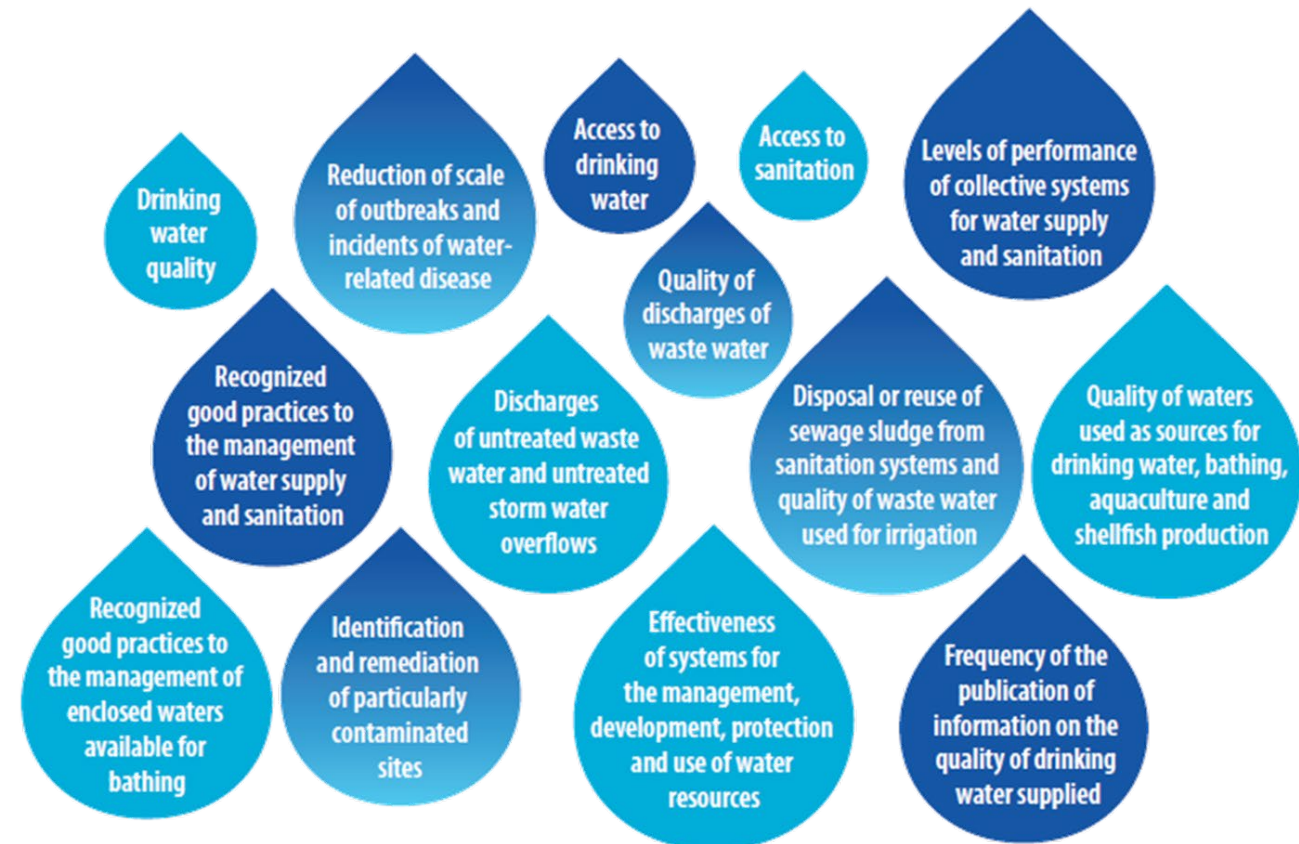


What does the Protocol offer?

Target setting and reporting mechanism – brings together environment and health sectors to set specific objectives through an **accountable** and **participatory** process

Concrete targets for **COVID-19 prevention, recovery and future preparedness** can be set on:

- ✓ Equitable access to water and sanitation
- ✓ WASH in schools and health-care facilities
- ✓ Environmental surveillance in wastewater
- ✓ Any other WASH aspect covered by Protocol target areas

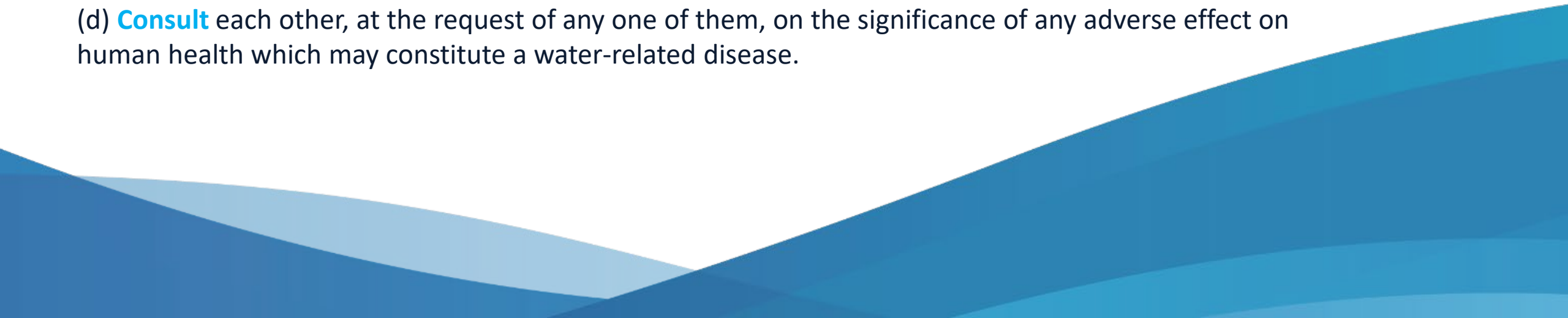


International cooperation on water and health under the Protocol

- Article 11, Parties shall **cooperate and assist each other**:
 - (a) In international actions in support of the objectives of this Protocol
 - (b) On request, in implementing national and local plans in pursuance of this Protocol
- Article 12, Joint and coordinated action in relation to:
 - (a) **Commonly agreed targets**, including on disease prevention
 - (b) **Indicators** to monitor the prevention, control and reduction of water-related diseases
 - (c) Establishment of **joint or coordinated systems** for surveillance and response to water-related diseases
 - (d) **Mutual assistance** in responding to water-related diseases
 - (e) The development of **integrated information systems and databases**
 - (f) **Notification** in cases of outbreaks and incidents, or significant threats of water-related diseases
 - (g) Exchange of information on effective means of **disseminating to the public information** about water-related disease.



Cooperation in transboundary waters

- Article 13, Parties to cooperate and assist each other to **prevent, control and reduce transboundary effects of water-related disease**.
 - Parties to:
 - (a) Exchange information and share knowledge** about the transboundary waters and the problems and risks which they present with the other Parties bordering the same waters;
 - (b) Endeavour to establish with Parties bordering the same waters joint or coordinated surveillance and early-warning systems and contingency plans** for responding to outbreaks, incidents and significant threats of water-related disease
 - (..)**
 - (d) Consult** each other, at the request of any one of them, on the significance of any adverse effect on human health which may constitute a water-related disease.
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International support for national action

- Parties shall consider how they can best help to promote:
 - (a) Preparation of **water-management plans** in transboundary, national and/or local contexts and of **schemes for improving water supply and sanitation**;
 - (b-c) Improved formulation of projects, especially infrastructure projects, and effective execution;
 - (d) Establishment of **systems for surveillance and early-warning, contingency plans and response capacities** in relation to water-related disease;
 - (e) Preparation of **legislation** needed to support the implementation of the Protocol;
 - (f) **Education and training** of professional and technical staff;
 - (g) Research into, and development of, **cost-effective means and techniques** for preventing, controlling and reducing water-related disease;
 - (h) Operation of effective networks to **monitor and assess** the provision and quality of water-related services;
 - (i) Achievement of quality assurance for monitoring activities, including inter-laboratory comparability

The background of the slide features a decorative graphic of overlapping, wavy bands in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Thank you for your attention!

More information on the Protocol is available [here](#)
protocol.water_health@un.org; euwatsan@who.int