

# Benefits of being a Party to the Protocol for a EU country: experience from Hungary

Supporting progress to achieve equitable access to  
water and sanitation in Bulgaria

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# Similarities of EU and Protocol commitment

- \* Strong commitment, similar basic principles and ambitions in environmental health
- \* Voluntary accession by autonomous state-parties
- \* Legally binding obligations
- \* Overlapping membership: 16 EU member states are party or signatory to the Protocol

# Differences in approach

## EU

- \* Common targets
- \* Selected areas of regulation on water and health
- \* Juridical enforcement process
- \* Available funding through cohesion funds
- \* Predefined level of development, strict deadlines

## Protocol

- \* National targets
- \* Holistic approach to water and health
- \* Consultative process
- \* Limited external funding (project facilitation mechanism)
- \* Allows for step-wise approach

# Examples of overlapping areas EU Directives and Protocol priority areas

- \* Drinking water quality (recently: risk-based approach)
- \* Protection of water resources
- \* Water management
- \* Flood management
- \* Wastewater treatment
- \* Catchment protection
- \* Natural bathing waters

# Target areas under the Protocol outside EU regulation

- \* **Coverage of community water supplies and equitable access to safe drinking water**
- \* **Sanitation in remote/scarcely populated areas and equitable access**
- \* Water related diseases
- \* Enclosed bathing waters
- \* Sustainable thermal water management
- \* Health aspects in environmental impact assessment
- \* Coordination between authorities

# Target setting in Hungary under the Protocol

- \* Hungary set targets 2008
- \* An intersectoral body was established to coordinate implementation, including target setting
- \* Protocol ratification and EU accession overlapped in time
- \* Some targets are in line with the EU obligations (drinking water, bathing water, urban waste water and water framework directive)
- \* Other targets are outside the scope of EU legislation (enclosed bathing waters, equity and affordability aspects, safe management, water related disease, information to the public, remediation of contaminated sites)

# Harmonisation of EU obligations and Protocol targets

- \* EU obligations provide legal pressure and financial support for achieving the targets
- \* Baseline analysis was also a necessity in many areas for the *acquis communautaire*
- \* The Protocol helps to phase implementation via defining intermediate targets, targets dates and indicators
- \* Many potential target areas are not covered by EU legislation
  - \* National priorities were addressed

# Protocol implementation in Hungary

- \* Protocol on Water and Health was declared by the Hungarian Government in October, 2005 (Government Decree 213/2005 (X. 5.))
- \* Implementation of the Protocol is the joint task of the ministries responsible for health and environment
- \* Implementation started after the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Parties in January, 2007.
- \* Water and Health Expert Committee was set up under the existing National Inter-ministerial Committee on Public Health
- \* First activity of the Expert Committee: drafting the targets and target deadlines.
- \* Targets were approved by the involved ministries and the Government.



# Linkages to EU membership

- \* Accession to EU in 2004
- \* Requirements of the membership apply, but many of them are not met at the time of accession
- \* Transposition time and derogations defined in the *acquis communautaire*
- \* Key requirements in connection with water and health:
  - \* Drinking water directive (98/83/EC)
  - \* Bathing water directive (2006/7/EC)
  - \* Urban wastewater directive (91/271/EEC)
  - \* Water framework directive (2000/60/EC)
- \* EU funding for the transition period
- \* Derogations allow for incremental improvement

# Targets and EU requirements

## EU requirement

Comply with the DWD quality standards

Under BWD, all bathing waters must be at least “sufficient” by 2015

Under UWWD, all agglomerations over 2000 users must have public sewage collection and treatment by 2015

All surface and subsurface water sources must reach “good” quality by 2015

## Targets

Access to chemically safe water for 96 % by 2015

Define quality standards for bathing water quality

Incremental implementation of the sanitation requirements

All drinking water supply zones serving more than 50 people should have protection zones defined by 2015

# Targets outside the scope of EU legislation

- \* Enclosed bathing waters – no harmonized EU legislation
  - \* Target: compile an inventory of enclosed bathing waters in Hungary, improve legislation
- \* Safe and efficient management – just recently incorporated (risk based approach)
  - \* Target: all water utilities serving over 5000 people should operate under a water safety plan by 2014
- \* Equitable access – only some elements of infrastructural access are covered
  - \* Target: assess marginalized group (Scorecard) and define social tariff system

# Conclusions

- \* Legal “pressure” from EU obligations accelerate progress
- \* The Protocol is a good tool for defining actions, intermediate targets and indicators.
- \* The Protocol provides a platform for defining national priorities in EU countries which are outside or beyond of the scope of the EU legislation.
- \* EU funds allow for more resource intensive targets
- \* Tools are available for meeting other targets e.g.
  - \* Legislation
  - \* Good practice guidance
  - \* Data acquisition through existing networks
  - \* Project funds
  - \* National programmes
- \* Protocol implementation inter-sectorial body is a good platform of cooperation on water and health topics



Thank you for your attention!