Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health and the target setting process in Hungary

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Ratification of the Protocol

- Hungary was involved in the Protocol from the beginning
- Alán Pintér, former chief medical health officer was among the earliest propagators of the idea
- The Hungarian Government formally adopted the Protocol on Water and Health 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 (two focal points)
- Implementation was started after the 1st Meeting of the Parties in January, 2007
Water and Health Expert Committee

- Official mandate from 2008
- Originally set up under the National Inter-ministerial Committee on Public Health
  - Chaired by the National Public Health Institute
  - National focal points (health and environment)
- Members (technical representation):
  - Ministry of Human Capacities (health)
  - Ministry of Interior (water resources)
  - Ministry of Agriculture
  - Cabinet of the Ministers (local governments)
  - Ministry of Technology and Innovation (water utilities)
  - Local public health services
  - NGOs (Water Utility Association, Pool and Spa Association, GWP)
Mandate of the Expert Committee

• Main task to coordinate the implementation of the Protocol in Hungary
  – Review and assess the progress of implementation
  – Report on the progress
  – Assist information exchange to facilitate implementation
  – Participate in the working groups and task forces of the Protocol (through national focal points)
  – Formulate short- and medium term task of the implementation
  – Propose an inter-ministerial framework to delegate tasks

• The Expert Committee formally meets at least once a year.

• First activity: drafting the targets and target dates
Target setting

- Experts identified problem areas
- Expert Committee drafted the targets (2008-2009)
- Meetings every 6 months
- Other stakeholders were also invited
- Targets were approved by the involved ministries and the Government
- Targets were submitted to the Secretariat in January, 2009
- Targets and target dates were published on a dedicated website
a) Drinking water quality (2010, 2015) – increase chemical compliance
b) Reducing water-borne disease (continuous) – improve surveillance
e) Public water supply and sewage performance – baseline analysis
f) Good management practices in water supply and sanitation – introduction of water safety planning
g) Reduction of untreated waste water (2015) – treatment to be introduced to all collective systems, decrease the proportion of combined sewers
Areas of target setting - 2

j) Quality of water used as a drinking water source, (2009) – baseline analysis, action plan, indicators for bathing water quality


n) Information systems improvement (drinking water quality, bathing water quality) (2008, continuous)

o) Climate adaptation – strategic planning
Implementation of the targets

- Level of implementation varies between targets
- Usually the progress is more defined on areas which overlap with the EU obligations (availability of finances)
  - Drinking water quality
  - Bathing water quality
  - Access to drinking water and sanitation
  - Water resource management

- Other areas with good progress:
  - Enclosed bathing waters
  - Information systems
  - Disease surveillance
  - Capacity building
  - Small scale waste-water treatment
Drinking water in Hungary

- Public water utilities serve every municipality, approximately 95% of the population
- 1770 water supply zones
- Mainly groundwater sources
- Future sources: 2/3 bank filtration
- Large geographic disparities, expected to increase with climate change and user demand
- Water consumption: 110 l/capita/day (60-180 l/day)
Access to safe drinking water is limited by quality rather than quantity.

Chemical contaminants of geological origin: As, B, F (+ammonium – nitrite formation potential)

**Target: 96% of the population to have access to safe DW by 2015**

Legal environment

National Drinking Water Improvement Programme

EU derogation
Arsenic (2016)

- <10 μg/L
- 10-20 μg/L
- >20 μg/L
- no data

Map of Hungary showing the distribution of arsenic levels in 2016.
Access to sanitation

Access to safe DW

Access to safe sanitation

Proportion of treated wastewater
Waste-water treatment

- Tertiary treatment
- Secondary treatment
- Mechanical treatment only
• Lead organization(s): National Public Health Centre
• Support by: Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, WHO, UNECE
• Partners:
  - Ministries: Interior, National Economy, National Development, Human Capacities
  - Hungarian Central Statistical Office
  - NGO-s: organisations working for disadvantageous groups, Red Cross
• Scale of the project: national
Outcomes of the assessment

- The favorable overall situation was confirmed
- Infrastructural development
- Government programme to reduce household costs

- Data gaps (disconnected users, private wells)
- Limited access for marginalized groups
- No social tariff system
Recommendations

**Legal framework**

- Strengthening the right for equitable access to water and sanitation in the legal environment
- Adaptation of the Building Code to reflect the minimum requirements for water and sanitation

**Infrastructure**

- Policy and financial support for decentralized services where public supply is unavailable
- Maintain public taps to support the access of the unserved population

**Closing the data gap**

- Initiate research to identify number and geographic distribution of groups living without access, and the reasons behind it.
- Establish regular data collection on access which is currently outside of the statistical reports.
- Repeat the equitable access assessment in 5 years to track progress
Information databases

• Information to the public and to other expert groups is essential for the implementation of all target areas
• Links in with other targets
• Some link in with EU requirements (DW quality, bathing water quality)
• Other databases:
  – Pool registry
  – Registry of contaminated sites
  – Water source database
  – Communicable disease surveillance database
  – System of interconnected water databases is under development
"Water for human use" database

Central data inventory

- Drinking water supply
- Natural bathing waters
- Proficiency testing for water labs
- Pools and spas
- Approval of materials in contact with water
Information to the public on drinking water quality
Bathing water
Revision of targets and target dates

• Most target dates “expired” in 2015

• Revision of targets and target dates is in progress (the Expert Committee met in June)
  – Taking into account outcomes of the recent reporting
  – Formulate indicators of progress more clearly
  – Use national targets towards meeting SDGs

• Planned target areas
  – Drinking water quality in buildings
  – Action plan to improve equitable access
  – Reduce water loss in the distribution system
Thank you for your attention!