Improving equitable access to water and sanitation

Yannick Pavageau, Ministry of Solidarities and Health, France
Marta Vargha, National Institute of Environmental Health, Hungary

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:


– 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

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

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

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.

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

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.

ARMENIA

AZERBAIJAN
Water supply established in 316 rural and urban secondary schools.

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

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

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

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

Improving equitable access to water and sanitation
Selected measures taken to address gaps identified through equitable access self-assessments carried out in 2011–2019
Two meetings of the Expert group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation organized: 4th meeting in Budapest (September 2017) and 5th 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);
  - 8th World Water Forum (Brasília, 18–23 March 2018);
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 “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