Swimming pools, spa and recreational water

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Background

- Protocol Art 6 para 2(k)
- WHO 2006 Guidelines for Safe Recreational Water Environments
- Bureau accepted offer from the Robens Centre for Protection of Water Quality and Human Health to study
Results

• 29 responses – 36% regulators, 23% researchers

• 11 countries: Andorra, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania, Switzerland, United...
Areas of investigation (% of respondents aware of regulations)

- Public pools (95% - mandatory)
- Private pools (30% - voluntary, some mandatory)
- Hot tubs (57% - voluntary)
- Physical therapy pools (48% - generally nationwide voluntary)
- Natural spas (26% - mixture)
- WHO (95%)
Discussion on public swimming pools

- Inconsistencies between national and local mandatory, and between national and local voluntary regulations
- Inconsistencies in application
- Other aspects of pool safety not consistency regulated: user hygiene, air quality, disinfection systems
Main problems relating to swimming pools, spas and similar recreational water environments

- Section answered primarily in relation to public swimming pools (72%)
- Most frequently reported problems in last 12 months:
  - Microbial contamination of water;
  - Chemical hazards associated with water;
  - Physical injuries associated with users
  - Risks associated with plant and equipment malfunction.
Basis for problem identification

- 72% public swimming pools
- 18% hot tubs
- 50% felt that sufficient health-based evidence exists to support further regulation, 31% did not.
Urgent research needs

• Technical standards for the operation
• Exposure to disinfectant by-products
• Link between trichloroamine in air of indoor pools and asthma
• Adequate treatment for spa
• Plant room safety
Possible action

• Improving and harmonizing health surveillance
• Development of technical standards for the operation of swimming pools, particularly with regard to chemical use
• Harmonization of legislation regarding pool operation and safety across Europe
• Analysis of good practice to increase safety in pool areas