

Ref.: 2017/OES/303/ENV/975

28 September 2017

Excellencies,

I have the honour of writing to you with regard to the Consultation Process under the Protocol on Water and Health, which is jointly serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. At its fourth session (Geneva, 14-16 November 2016), the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol noted with appreciation the consultations held in 2015-2016. Based on the positive experience of the Parties concerned, the Meeting of the Parties endorsed the terms of reference governing the Consultation Process according to which the Committee may, based on its assessment of the results of the summary reports submitted by Parties to the Protocol or other information available to the Committee, invite a Party or a small group of Parties having identical or almost identical implementation problems to engage in a consultation (see enclosed terms of reference). The Meeting of the Parties also encouraged Parties facing challenges in implementing the Protocol to engage in discussions with the Committee on the opportunities offered by the Consultation Process.

At its fourteenth meeting (Geneva, 13-14 March 2017), based on the outcome of the third reporting cycle, the Committee identified intersectoral coordination, public participation and the interaction between the requirements under the Protocol and European Union legislation in the field of water, sanitation and health as the most relevant issues to be taken up in potential consultations in the current triennium.

At this same meeting, the Committee requested the secretariat to contact Parties that had not communicated their targets to ask them to either provide information about their progress with the target-setting processes or to communicate the targets that had been formally established. In this relation, I would like to thank Lithuania for providing a detailed response to the Committee's request.

His Excellency
Mr. Kęstutis Navickas
Minister of Environment
of the Republic of Lithuania
Vilnius

His Excellency
Mr. Aurelijus Veryga
Minister of Health
of the Republic of Lithuania
Vilnius

Having considered your response and the information contained in the Lithuanian latest national summary report, as well as taking into account the main implementation challenges outlined above, the Committee would like to invite Lithuania to engage in a Consultation Process.

I would like to recall that the Consultation Process is not a compliance review procedure. Hence, it is not of an inquisitive nature and its objective is not to establish whether a Party is non-compliant. The objective of the Process is to assist Parties in implementing the provisions of the Protocol on Water and Health. It consists of advice and assistance, which may vary depending on the specific conditions and needs of the Party involved. It may address scientific, technical, legal and administrative issues. The procedure is guided by the same principles guiding the work of the Compliance Committee, i.e., that it be simple, facilitative, non-adversarial and cooperative.

Please note that the Committee also extended a similar invitation to Estonia and Latvia. As the three Baltic States seem to face similar implementation challenges under the Protocol, the Committee considered that consultations engaging the three countries would allow mutual learning and exchange.

I would encourage your country to use this opportunity to engage in a constructive discussion on the implementation of the Protocol. I would appreciate receiving your response to the invitation by 28 October 2017.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,


Olga Algayerova

Enclosure(s)