

Item 14

Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation

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6th Session of the

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health

16-18 November | Geneva | Switzerland

Why is this work important for the pan-European region?

- Supports the **implementation of the Protocol's requirement** to ensure **equitable access** to water and sanitation for all, particularly those suffering a disadvantage social exclusion (**article 5 of the Protocol**);
- Supports **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.
- In light of previous and ongoing revisions of the **relevant EU directives** (DWD/ UWWT), **promotion of the tools developed under this PA** will contribute to implementing their respective obligations.
- Supports implementation of **SDG targets 1.4, 4.A, 6.1, 6.2 and 11.1** and Parma Declaration on Environment and Health.



Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes (1)



Main outcomes of the 6th meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access (24-25 March 2021)

- 69 participants, including 10 pan-European countries which participated to the Expert Group meeting for the first time
- Exchange of experiences from both EU and non-EU countries on how to further align to the revised EU Drinking Water Directive – taking into account lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Inputs and experiences shared by countries at the Meeting were reflected in the development of the Policy Brief on Affordability

Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes (2)

Outcomes of the Regional Workshop on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation (Geneva, virtual, 13-14 June 2022)

- 109 participants, including representatives from national governments, water and sanitation service providers, civil society organizations and international agencies
- Provided an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned from the impacts of /actions taken to respond to COVID-19
- Discussed to what extent the Equitable Access Score-card is still relevant and it should be revised to consider lessons learned from the pandemic



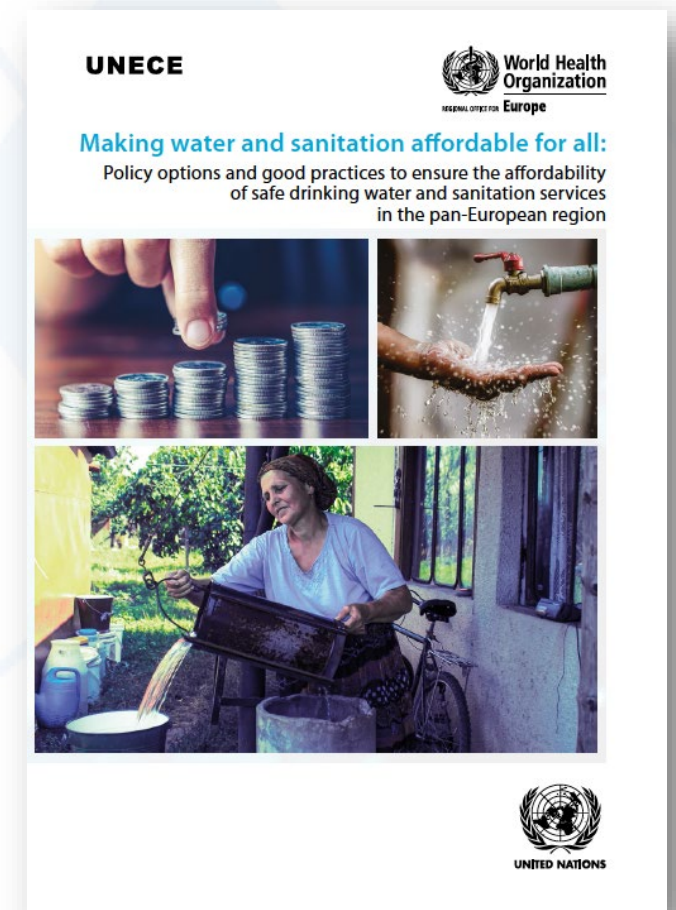
Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes (3)

Making water and sanitation affordable for all

- Publication **officially launched** at the Regional Workshop on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation (June 2022)
- **Focus:** Why does affordability matter? What policy and social protection options and measures are available to ensure it?

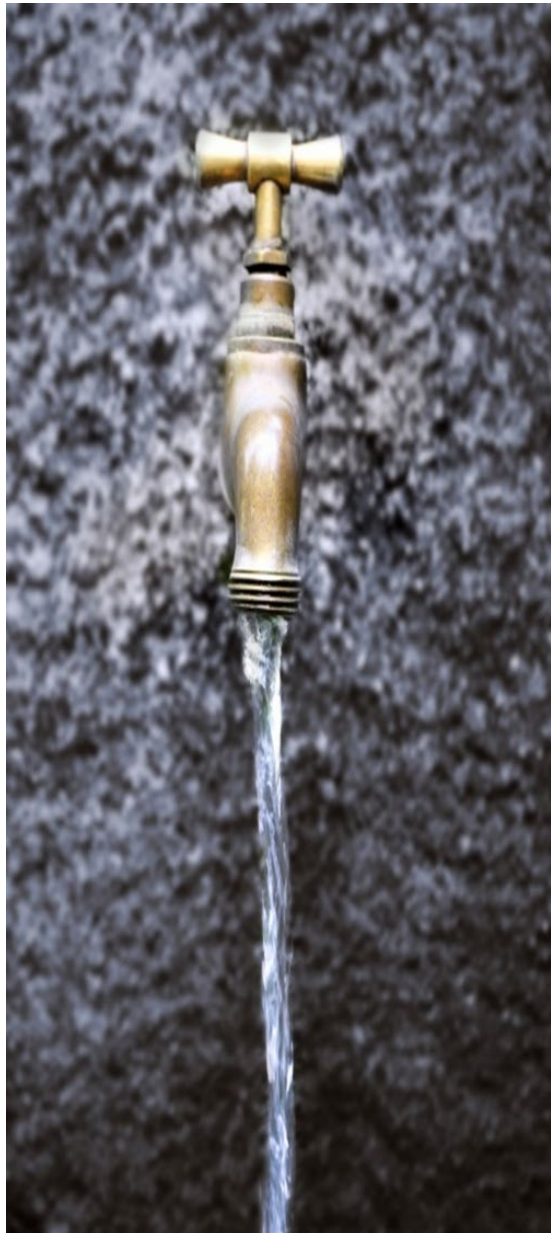
The publication intends to:

- **Raise the profile of affordability** among policymakers
- Enhance the understanding of **how affordability concerns can be addressed**
- **Promote further action** on ensuring affordable water and sanitation services



Challenges and lessons learnt for future work

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities
- Ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation constitutes a first line of defense in preventing and controlling the spread of infectious diseases
- The recast of the EU Drinking Water Directive (2020) introduced an obligation for improving equitable access to water and explicitly refers to the Score-Card developed under the Protocol
- Affordability issue requires more in-depth discussion
- Further streamlining is necessary with other global and regional initiatives on equitable access



Suggested future work in this area

1. Support assessments of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation

1.1 Revise and compliment the *Equitable Access Score-card* as a tool to assess the ability to secure the provision of water and sanitation services in the context of COVID-19 and other potential emergency situations;

1.2 Support up to four self-assessments on the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation in countries using the *Equitable Access Score-card*.

2. Foster the adoption and implementation of measures to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation

2.1 Support the development of equitable access action plans and/or related policy developments in up to two countries;

2.2 Organize up to two meetings of the Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation to facilitate the exchange of experiences;

2.3 Promote the importance of affordability in ensuring equitable water and sanitation services, including by disseminating the publication *Making water and sanitation affordable for all*.

3. Promote awareness on equitable access to water and sanitation, as well as synergies with relevant global and regional processes, policies and instruments

3.1 Promote the use of the Protocol tools on equitable access to meet and implement obligations arising from the European Union revised Drinking Water Directive;

3.2 Promote the strengthening of efforts on equitable access to sanitation, including in the context of the ongoing revision of the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive;

3.3 Promote political awareness on existing inequities in regional and international events, including through strengthening cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Thank you for your attention!

