



UNECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health

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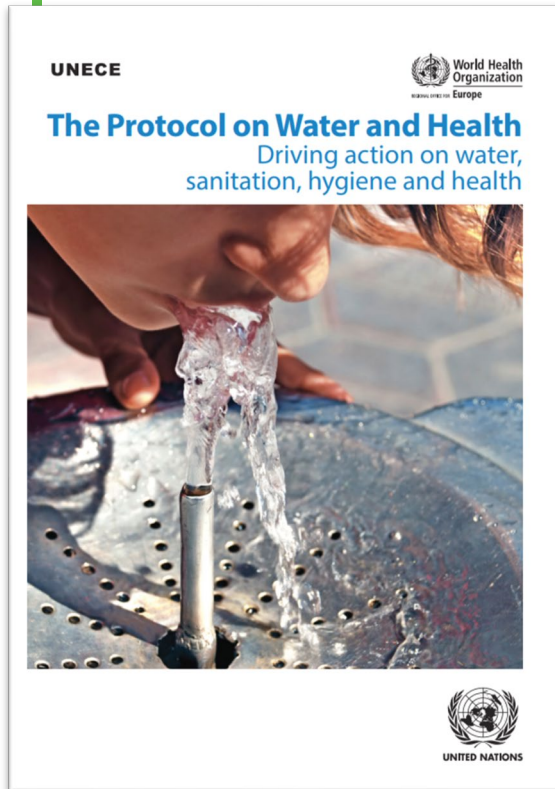
H.E. Ambassador
Margit Szucs,
Hungary



Protocol on Water and Health Status



ENVIRONMENT



- Adopted in 1999, **entered into force** in 2005
- **28 Parties** as of October 2023, 36 Signatories, over 40 UNECE MS working in its framework
- **Objective:** protect human health and well-being through sustainable water management and by preventing water-related diseases
- **Scope:** protection of water at source, drinking water supply from catchment to consumption & sanitation (wastewater collection, treatment, reuse, water used for recreation)
- **Legally binding treaty** focusing on water, sanitation, hygiene and health (brings together environment & health sectors)
- **UNECE and WHO/Europe** provide joint secretariat functions

Developments and achievements



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- **Exchange platform & knowledge hub** on WASH & health
- **Inter-ministerial working groups** established in ~30 UNECE MS
- **National WASH targets** set by 25 Parties and other States
- **Mandatory reporting system**: water and health data regularly collected (36 countries in 2022) & used in the monitoring of SDG 6.1 and 6.2 (JMP...)
- **Equitable access self-assessment methodology** applied in 13 countries leading to legislative revisions & improving drinking water supply in rural areas
- **EU DWD and WWTD** explicitly refer to the Protocol tools for assessment of equity baseline. Also supports risk management requirements
- **Water Action Agenda** (UN 2023 Water Conference): a number of Protocol-related commitments submitted by UNECE MS

Lessons learned and challenges



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- The Protocol is a **flexible tool** that can be used to address emerging threats in different socio-economic contexts
- The Protocol's work is fundamental in **accelerating regional implementation** of the 2030 Agenda, 2023 Budapest declaration & WHA resolutions on WASH in health-care facilities and COVID-19 response, and human rights on water & sanitation
- **Increasing regional membership:** call on all UNECE MS not yet Parties and the EU to accede to the Protocol!
- **Sustainable human and financial resources** needed to support growing membership & requests for policy and technical support

Plans and prospects



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- **Promoting** Protocol as tool to implement global and regional priorities (SDGs, EU Directives)
- **Increasing** number of Parties
- **Policy and technical priorities**
 - Increasing climate resilience of water and sanitation sector to extreme weather events and other climate risks
 - Progressive realization of the human rights (access to water and sanitation and hand hygiene promotion)
 - Prevention of and preparedness for epidemics of infectious diseases
- **Long-term vision and strategy** for Protocol implementation currently under development by the Bureau



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Thank you!

**H.E. Ambassador Margit Szucs,
Hungary, Chair country of the
Protocol on Water and Health**

