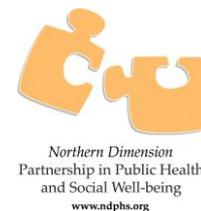


**Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR)
Twenty Second Meeting
Reykjavik, Iceland
16-17 October 2013**



Reference	CSR 22/7/1
Title	UNECE/WHO Euro Protocol on Water and Health
Submitted by	Chairmanship of the UNECE/WHO Euro Protocol on Water and Health
Summary / Note	This document presents the UN ECE/WHO Euro Protocol on Water and Health and ideas regarding the areas proposed to be explored for potential collaboration between the NDPHS and the Protocol
Requested action	For decision

UNECE/WHO EURO PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

The Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes is the only holistic, legally-binding agreement between sovereign states to promote sustainable resource management and reduce water-related disease.

The protocol entered into force in 2003. It is open for Member States of the WHO European region, out of which 26 so far have ratified the Protocol on Water and Health. Most of the NDPHS countries have either ratified the Protocol (like Finland, Norway, Germany and the Baltic countries), or otherwise contribute to the issue (like Sweden).

The Protocol has been recognized as a useful tool to secure water and sanitation by the Parma declaration and in connection with the WHO declaration on human right to water.

Objective

The Protocol seeks to protect human health and well-being by improved sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems, and by preventing, controlling, and reducing water-related diseases. It is the first international, legally-binding agreement of its kind adopted specifically to attain a sufficient supply of safe water and adequate sanitation for all, and to ensure an effective protection of the entire water cycle. The Protocol covers i.a. surface freshwaters, groundwaters coastal waters used for recreation or aquaculture and wastewater.

Obligations for Parties according to the Protocol

With the aim to pursue access to drinking water and sanitation for everyone, Parties are obliged to set firm, measurable targets for action; are required to report at regular intervals on progress towards these targets; and are subject to evaluation.

Surveillance and timely detection of outbreaks or new emerging diseases are essential to improve the health situation of the countries and the Protocol requires parties to establish such response systems. To this end, the Parties have developed Policy guidance and Technical guidance on water-related disease surveillance.

On the basis of the obligations (a three year annual work program is developed) a Project Facilitation Mechanism was established to assist Parties in achieving the goals of the Protocol. The draft Program of work 2014 – 2016 is proposed to cover i.a. activities in improving governance for water and health, prevention and reduction of water-related diseases, safe and efficient management, small scale systems for water and sanitation, assistance to support implementation and equitable access.

Implementation efforts by Parties are supported by a Joint Secretariat at the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). An independent non-judicial Compliance Committee monitors progress and reports on its findings and explores possibilities for assistance in case where targets are not met. The objective of the Compliance Committee is to facilitate and assist Parties in resolving problems.

Financial and technical support to Parties

The Protocol is based on voluntary contributions for its financing. In addition, implementation efforts are significantly supported by in-kind sectoral cooperation from governmental and non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, the private sector, and the general public.

In 2007 the Parties established a Project Facilitation Mechanism (PFM) to help mainstream international support for national action line with the Protocol to:

- 1) set targets and target dates (article 6)
- 2) establish surveillance, early-warning and response systems (article 8)

The PFM was set up to contribute to the following:

- assist Parties in implementing the articles 12 and 14 of the Protocol related to the improved formulation of projects in order to facilitate access to sources of finance
- upon request, the PFM will support Parties and non-Parties from South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in their efforts to implement the Protocol, in particular with regard to set targets (article 6) and establish surveillance systems (article 8).
- The major success of the PFM was the creation of the Water Fund in 2010 at EBRD under the initiative and leadership of Norway. The aim of the Fund is to finance projects and/or programmes in the water sector of certain of the Bank's recipient countries (which are eligible for Official Development Assistance ("ODA")).
- The progress achieved by the PFM will be carried forward under the new work program as "Assistance to support implementation" where the cooperation with the EBRD will be an essential part.
- In order to assist Parties that have already adopted targets, cooperation with the EBRD provides access to financial means to implement the target set. A total of seven project proposals have been submitted by the Parties to the PFM: Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Georgia, and Montenegro. Six projects have been supported, by Norway in donors Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan, by Switzerland the Republic of Moldova, Georgia by Germany, and Finland which has assisted Armenia). Through assistance provided by the PFM and the UNECE secretariats, capacities were strengthened on the development of project proposals for financing implementation of targets set and supported by the government in the recipient countries.

Despite a challenging economic situation for European countries in general, Parties are making good progress in implementing the provisions of the protocol. While Parties are setting targets, also countries that are not yet Party to the Protocol use it as a model for their work on water and health.

Areas to be explored for Potential collaboration between the NDPHS and the Protocol

- cost effective drinking water quality surveillance
- water related disease surveillance and prevention
- small scale water supply and sanitation
- Safe and efficient management