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Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Water and Health to the Convention on
the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Water and Health

Fifteenth meeting

Geneva, 13 and 14 May 2025

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the fifteenth meeting

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting on Tuesday,
13 May 2025, at 10 a.m.*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Progress in the ratification process.
3. Role of the Protocol in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global and regional commitments:
 - (a) Recent processes and developments at the global and regional levels with regard to water and sanitation;
 - (b) Process of preparing the draft programme of work for the Protocol for the triennium 2026–2028.

* In accordance with United Nations accreditation procedures, participants are requested to complete the online registration procedure available on the web page for the fifteenth meeting (<https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/15th-meeting-working-group-water-and-health>) as soon as possible, but by no later than **29 April 2025**. On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website: www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 3071.



4. Improving governance for water and health through setting targets, implementing measures and reporting:
 - (a) Setting targets and implementing measures;
 - (b) Strengthening capacity to monitor progress and reporting: sixth reporting exercise;
 - (c) Improving governance on water and health at the national level.
5. Prevention and reduction of water-related diseases.
6. Water, sanitation and hygiene in institutional settings and public places.
7. Small-scale water supply and sanitation.
8. Safe management of water supply and sanitation systems.
9. Equitable access to water and sanitation: translating the human rights to water and sanitation into practice.
10. Increasing resilience to climate change.
11. Raising awareness on the Protocol and facilitating accession.
12. Compliance procedure.
13. Implementation of the programme of work for 2023–2025.
14. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.
15. Programme of work for 2026–2028, terms of reference for the bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation.
16. Draft Strategy for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health.
17. Other business.
18. Date and venue of the sixteenth meeting.
19. Closure of the meeting.

II. Annotations

1. The main objectives of the fifteenth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) are to:

(a) Review the implementation of the programme of work of the Protocol for 2023–2025 (ECE/MP.WH/24/Add.1–EUCHP/2219533/3.1/2022/MOP-6/06/Add.1), adopted at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Geneva, 16–18 November 2022);

(b) Discuss the draft programme of work for 2026–2028 (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2025/3–EUCDE/2422164/3.1/2025/WGWH/07, forthcoming) and the resources required for its implementation;

(c) Discuss the preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Budapest, 5–7 November 2025).

2. The Working Group will also discuss how to benefit from the Protocol’s practical framework to facilitate progress in the implementation of the water, sanitation, hygiene and health-related Sustainable Development Goals in the pan-European region.

3. The meeting will begin on Tuesday, 13 May 2025, at 10 a.m., and will close on Wednesday, 14 May 2025, at 5.30 p.m.

4. The working languages of the meeting will be English, French and Russian.

5. All relevant documentation for the meeting of the Working Group will be available on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) website.¹

6. The meeting will be held in an in-person format only. In view of the limited time available, participants are requested to limit the length of their interventions to two minutes. The Chair will strictly enforce this limit. Full statements or presentations provided to the joint secretariat will be posted on the meeting's web page. To facilitate the smooth running of the sessions, delegations planning to make a statement are invited to inform the joint secretariat in advance.

7. The meeting will be jointly serviced by the ECE and World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe secretariats.

1. Adoption of the agenda

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 10–10.05 a.m.

8. The Chair of the Working Group on Water and Health will open the meeting and welcome participants. The Working Group is expected to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document.

2. Progress in the ratification process

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 10.05–10.15 a.m.

9. As of 28 February 2025, the following 29 countries are Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

10. Representatives of signatories and other States not yet Parties to the Protocol will be invited to report on progress and/or any anticipated development in their respective countries with respect to becoming a Party to the Protocol.

3. Role of the Protocol in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global and regional commitments

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 10.15–11.15 a.m.

(a) Recent processes and developments at the global and regional levels with regard to water and sanitation

11. The Working Group will be informed about recent processes and developments at the global and regional levels with regard to water and sanitation, such as the: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; United Nations 2026 Water Conference (to be co-hosted by Senegal and the United Arab Emirates (United Arab Emirates, 2–4 December 2026)); United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation; Declaration of the Seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Budapest Declaration); and other relevant global and regional environmental and health commitments. The Working Group will then discuss how to benefit from and give prominence to the work under the Protocol with regard to the implementation, follow-up and review of global and regional commitments in the areas of environment, water, sanitation, hygiene and health, including in the context of the upcoming seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

(b) Process of preparing the draft programme of work for the Protocol for the triennium 2026–2028

¹ See <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/15th-meeting-working-group-water-and-health>.

12. The Working Group will be informed about the process of preparing the draft programme of work for the Protocol for the triennium 2026–2028, to be adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session, including the overall scope, rationale and the institutional structure. The process consisted of a consultation exercise, including discussions in the different intergovernmental bodies and informant interviews conducted by consultants. On the basis of these various inputs, a draft programme of work for 2026–2028 was prepared by the Bureau in consultation with lead Parties and countries, also considering the above-mentioned broader developments related to water and sanitation. Subsequently, for each programme area (see agenda items 4–12 below, respectively), lead Parties and countries will showcase the progress achieved since the fourteenth meeting of the Working Group (Geneva, 16–17 April 2024) and introduce proposed future activities.

Documentation

Draft programme of work for 2026–2028 (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2025/3–EUCDE/2422164/3.1/2025/WGWH/07)

4. Improving governance for water and health through setting targets, implementing measures and reporting

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 11.15 a.m.–1 p.m.

(a) Setting targets and implementing measures

13. A representative of Switzerland, Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting, will report on the progress made in this area, including by summarizing the outcomes of the fourteenth meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting (Budapest, 12–13 December 2024). The Chair will also invite a representative of Portugal, the Vice-Chair of the Task Force, to inform participants about the main outcomes and recommendations of the subregional workshop “Increasing climate resilience of the water and sanitation sector in the Mediterranean Region” (Lisbon, 4–5 June 2024).

14. Countries that have achieved substantial progress in setting, revising and/or implementing their targets since the fourteenth meeting of the Task Force will be invited to report on any significant developments.

15. Subsequently, representatives of Portugal, Romania and Switzerland, lead Parties for programme area 1 on improving governance for water and health through setting targets, implementing measures and reporting, will introduce suggested future activities for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

(b) Strengthening capacity to monitor progress and reporting: sixth reporting exercise

16. The joint secretariat will report on the status of the sixth reporting exercise under the Protocol, providing an overview of national summary reports submitted by Parties and other States, as well as an update on the preparation of the regional report on the status of implementation of the Protocol. Participants will be invited to provide their comments, including on experiences with using the new online reporting system under the Protocol.

17. The Working Group will exchange experience in monitoring and reporting on water-, sanitation-, hygiene- and health-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators and will discuss how the work under the Protocol could further support these efforts.

(c) Improving governance on water and health at the national level

18. The Working Group will be informed about progress with improving governance on water and health at the national level through the provision of support to Parties and other States in setting targets, establishing action plans and implementing measures to achieve them, including through several ongoing projects, such as: the “EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data” programme for the Eastern Partnership Countries; and the Biennial Collaborative Agreements and Country Cooperation Strategies established between ministries of health and WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Documentation

Decision VI/1 on general issues of compliance (in particular, the section entitled “Reporting under the Protocol in accordance with article 7”) (ECE/MP.WH/24/Add.2–EUCHP/2219533/3.1/2022/MOP-6/06/Add.2)

Report of the fourteenth meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting (informal document)

Report of the subregional workshop “Increasing climate resilience of the water and sanitation sector in the Mediterranean Region” (informal document)

5. Prevention and reduction of water-related diseases

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 3–3.45 p.m.

19. Representatives of Belarus and Norway, lead Parties for programme area 2 on prevention and reduction of water-related diseases, will inform the Working Group about the progress of work on: (a) strengthening national and local capacities for surveillance and outbreak management of water-related diseases; (b) strengthening national capacities for risk-based surveillance of drinking water supply and quality, including the Meeting on risk-based drinking-water surveillance, organized in collaboration with the Nordic-Baltic Network for Water and Health (Tallinn, 24–26 April 2024); (c) improving capacity for environmental surveillance of wastewater, including engagement with other relevant initiatives (e.g., the European Union project entitled Wastewater Integrated Surveillance for Public Health (WISH)) and forthcoming capacity-building events in this area of work; and (d) the ongoing collation of evidence on the status of legionella in the pan-European region.

20. Participants will be invited to provide information on national initiatives on prevention and reduction of water-related diseases in accordance with article 8 of the Protocol on Water and Health.

21. Representatives of the lead Parties will introduce suggested future activities for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

Documentation

Report of the meeting on risk-based drinking-water surveillance in Nordic-Baltic countries (informal document)

Draft report on the status of legionella as a water-related disease in the pan-European region (informal document)

6. Water, sanitation and hygiene in institutional settings and public places

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 3.45–4.30 p.m.

22. Representatives of Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova, lead Parties and countries for programme area 3 on water, sanitation and hygiene in institutional settings and public places, will report on the progress of work on: (a) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in healthcare facilities, including a planned regional meeting in Budapest in July 2025; (b) WASH in schools, including on the development of information booklets on menstrual health and hand hygiene; and (c) action for hand hygiene in public places.

23. Participants will be invited to provide information on national activities on WASH in institutional settings and public places, including in relation to setting and implementing targets under the Protocol.

24. Representatives of the lead Parties and countries will then introduce suggested future activities for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

Documentation

Draft document Improving quality of care through water, sanitation and hygiene services: highlights and progress in the pan-European Region (informal document)

Draft Booklet on good practices for hand hygiene and menstrual health in schools in the pan-European Region (informal document)

National situational analysis of water, sanitation and hygiene in healthcare facilities in Montenegro: Summary report (informal document)

7. Small-scale water supply and sanitation

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 4.30–5.15 p.m.

25. Representatives of Germany and Serbia, lead Parties for programme area 4 on small-scale water supply and sanitation, will inform the Working Group about work undertaken on: (a) supporting an enabling environment for small-scale systems; (b) strengthening policy uptake and application of approaches to safe management of small-scale systems; and (c) improving the evidence base and supporting policy action on small-scale sanitation.

26. Participants will be invited to provide information on national activities to improve small-scale water supply and sanitation, specifically actions taken to enhance enabling environments for small-scale systems, improve the evidence base, and support the uptake of safe management approaches in small systems.

27. Representatives of the lead Parties will introduce suggested future work in this programme area for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

Documentation

Concept note of a publication on on-site sanitation in the pan-European region (informal document)

8. Safe management of water supply and sanitation systems

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 13 May, 5.15–6 p.m.

28. Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, lead Parties for programme area 5 on safe management of water supply and sanitation systems, will inform the Working Group about the progress made on: (a) supporting safe and climate-resilient management of water and sanitation services, including the Workshop on water safety plan auditing (Split, Croatia, 6–7 May 2024) and support to national uptake of the water safety plan approach; and (b) strengthening attention to sanitation, wastewater reuse and wastewater quality.

29. Participants will be invited to provide information on national processes and activities towards adopting the water safety and sanitation safety planning approaches in policy and practice at the national level.

30. Representatives of the lead Parties will introduce suggested future activities for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

9. Equitable access to water and sanitation: translating the human rights to water and sanitation into practice

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 10–10.45 a.m.

31. Representatives of France, Hungary and North Macedonia, lead Parties for programme area 6 on equitable access to water and sanitation: translating the human rights to water and sanitation into practice, will present the progress of work, in particular the launch

of *The Equitable Access Score-card 2.0: Shaping Water and Sanitation Policies to Achieve the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation* (ECE/MP.WH/25).

32. Participants will be invited to report on relevant action taken at the national and/or local level in the area of equitable access to water and sanitation, and/or to express interest in the application of the Protocol tools on equity during the future triennium.

33. Representatives of the lead Parties will introduce suggested future activities for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

Documentation

The Equitable Access Score-card 2.0: Shaping Water and Sanitation Policies to Achieve the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation (ECE/MP.WH/25)

Outcome document of the Regional Workshop on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health: Strengthening regional WASH efforts through Protocol tools (Budapest, 11–12 December 2024) (informal document)

Country report: Montenegro Self-assessment on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation (informal document)

Country report: Albania Self-assessment on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation (informal document)

10. Increasing resilience to climate change

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 10.45–11.30 a.m.

34. Representatives of Italy and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, lead countries for programme area 7 on increasing resilience to climate change, will present the progress of work, in particular the outcomes of the Global workshop on increasing climate resilience with a focus on floods and health on the transboundary and national levels, organized jointly under the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 19–20 March 2025).

35. The joint secretariat will report on the relevant outcomes of the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (Baku, 11–22 November 2024), as well as introduce key messages and recommendations of the action-oriented document on mainstreaming water supply, sanitation, transboundary water management and cooperation into Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans that were also presented at the Conference.

36. Representatives of the lead Parties will introduce suggested future activities for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

Documentation

Strategic paper on strengthening climate resilience in the drinking water and sanitation sector through the Protocol on Water and Health (informal document)

Mainstreaming water supply, sanitation, transboundary water management and cooperation into Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans (informal document)

11. Raising awareness on the Protocol and facilitating accession

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 11.30 a.m.–noon

37. The joint secretariat will report on the activities undertaken to raise awareness on the Protocol, including through participation in different international events, and activities undertaken or planned to promote accession to the Protocol.

38. Delegates will be invited to report on any possible actions implemented at the national or subnational levels to raise awareness on the Protocol and facilitate accession.

39. The joint secretariat will then introduce suggested future activities for the period 2026–2028. The Working Group will discuss the proposed activities.

12. Compliance procedure

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, noon–12.30 p.m.

40. The Chair of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol will report on the outcomes of the Committee's twenty-fifth meeting (Geneva, 2 July 2024). In particular, the Working Group will be informed about relevant developments concerning the review of compliance with the obligation to set targets and target dates under the Protocol and the Committee's activities to facilitate compliance with the obligations under the Protocol, in particular in relation to public health.

41. The Working Group will be invited to comment on the information provided.

Documentation

Report of the Compliance Committee on its twenty-fifth meeting (ECE/MP.WH/C.1/2024/2–EUCDE/2422164/3.1/2024/CC/06)

Decision VI/1 on general issues of compliance (ECE/MP.WH/24/Add.2–EUCHP/2219533/3.1/2022/MOP-6/06/Add.2)

Draft interpretive note focusing on the key provisions of the Protocol relating to public health (informal document)

13. Implementation of the programme of work for 2023–2025

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 12.30–1 p.m.

42. On the basis of discussions under previous agenda items, the Working Group will generally review progress made with regard to the implementation of the Protocol's programme of work for 2023–2025 and will entrust its Chair, as well as the lead Parties and countries for different programme areas, with the assistance of the joint secretariat, with the task of preparing a report on the progress achieved for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

43. The Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol entrusted the Working Group to oversee the management of the funds of the Protocol² under the ECE Technical Cooperation Trust Fund and the WHO Regional Office for Europe Voluntary Fund. Based on an informal document prepared by the joint secretariat, the Working Group will review the financial status of the two funds, the contributions received, the funds used and the resources that will be required for the implementation of the programme of work for 2023–2025, including for the organization of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

44. Representatives of Parties, other States, relevant international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and partners will be invited to express their intention to contribute to the implementation of the programme of work for 2023–2025, including the organization of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties through, inter alia, financial support and in-kind contributions.

Documentation

Programme of work for 2023–2025 (ECE/MP.WH/24/Add.1–EUCHP/2219533/3.1/2022/MOP-6/06/Add.1)

² ECE/MP.WH/2/Add.2–EUR/06/5069385/1/Add.2, decision I/5, para. 5.

Overview of contributions and expenditures related to the Protocol and resources required up to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties (informal document)

14. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 3–3.30 p.m.

45. The Working Group will discuss the preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties, including the draft agenda, the thematic scope and organization of a high-level session, as well as the procedural and organizational aspects. The Working Group will provide its comments and advice to the Bureau and the joint secretariat on the preparations, as appropriate.

Documentation

Draft agenda for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties, including a list of documentation (informal document)

15. Programme of work for 2026–2028, terms of reference for the bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 3.30–4.45 p.m.

46. On the basis of discussions under previous agenda items, as well as the draft programme of work for 2026–2028 prepared by the joint secretariat in consultation with the Bureau and lead Parties, the Working Group will be invited to discuss and advise on future activities under the Protocol. The Working Group will also be invited to agree on the future institutional structure under the Protocol and the mandates and terms of reference of the different subsidiary bodies, in order to guide and facilitate the implementation of the programme of work for 2026–2028.

47. Subsequently, the Working Group will discuss the resources needed for the implementation of the draft programme of work, based on the informal document with an overview of resource requirements for 2026–2028 prepared by the joint secretariat. Participants will discuss possible ways and means to attain the level of financing needed to implement future activities.

48. In this regard, the Chair of the Bureau will introduce the draft decision on targets for financial sustainability of the work under the Protocol on Water and Health, prepared by the Bureau. The Working Group will agree on the way forward towards finalization of the draft decision, including targets for financial sustainability of the work under the Protocol, for its submission to and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

49. Representatives of Parties, other States, relevant international organizations, NGOs and other institutions will be invited to report on their intention to contribute to the implementation of the draft programme of work for 2026–2028 through, inter alia, financial support and in-kind contributions and/or by becoming a partner in the implementation of specific activities or programme areas.

50. The Working Group will agree on the way forward towards finalization of the draft programme of work for 2026–2028, including the overview of extrabudgetary resource requirements, for its submission to and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft programme of work for 2026–2028 (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2025/3–EUCDE/2422164/3.1/2025/WGWH/07, forthcoming)

Draft decision on targets for financial sustainability of the work under the Protocol on Water and Health (ECE/MP.WH/WG.1/2025/4–EUCDE/2422164/3.1/2025/WGWH/08)

Overview of resource requirements for 2026–2028 (informal document)

16. Draft Strategy for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 4.45–5.15 p.m.

51. The Chair of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties will present the draft Strategy for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health, prepared by the Bureau. The Working Group will be invited to provide comments. The Working Group will also agree on the ways and means to further develop and finalize the document.

Documentation

Draft Strategy for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health (informal document)

17. Other business

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 5.15–5.20 p.m.

52. Delegates wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the joint secretariat as soon as possible.

18. Date and venue of the sixteenth meeting

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 5.20–5.25 p.m.

53. The Working Group will set a tentative date and venue for its sixteenth meeting.

19. Closure of the meeting

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 14 May, 5.25–5.30 p.m.

54. The Chair will close the meeting at 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 14 May 2025.
