The Protocol on Water and Health and links with COVID-19

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The Protocol on Water and Health

Legally-binding agreement aimed at protecting human health and well-being through sustainable water management and by reducing water-related diseases

Obligation to set targets to ensure access to drinking water and sanitation for everyone (special focus on equitable access)

27 countries are Parties to the Protocol

UNECE and WHO/Europe provide joint secretariat services

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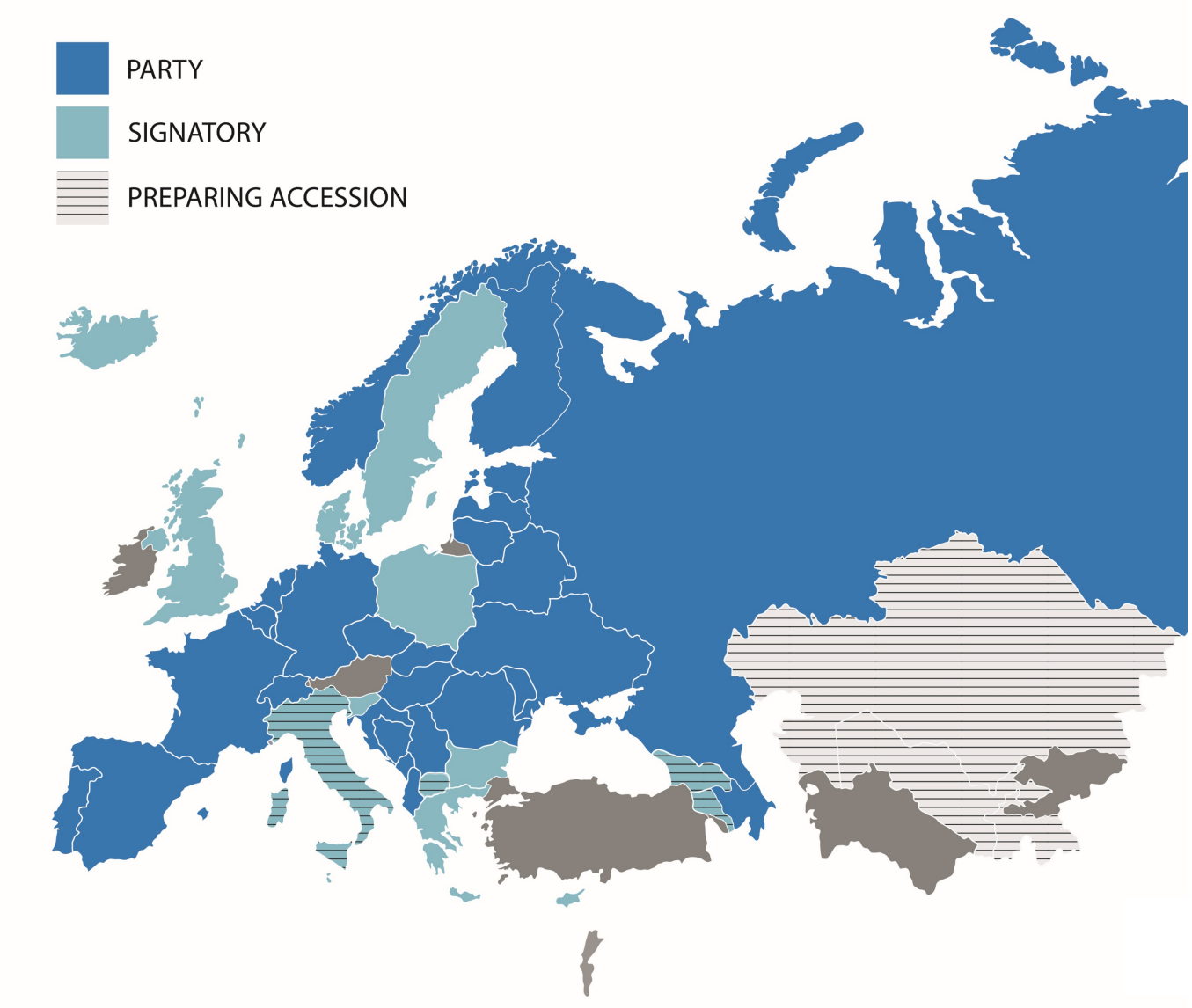
Parties and States working within the Protocol framework



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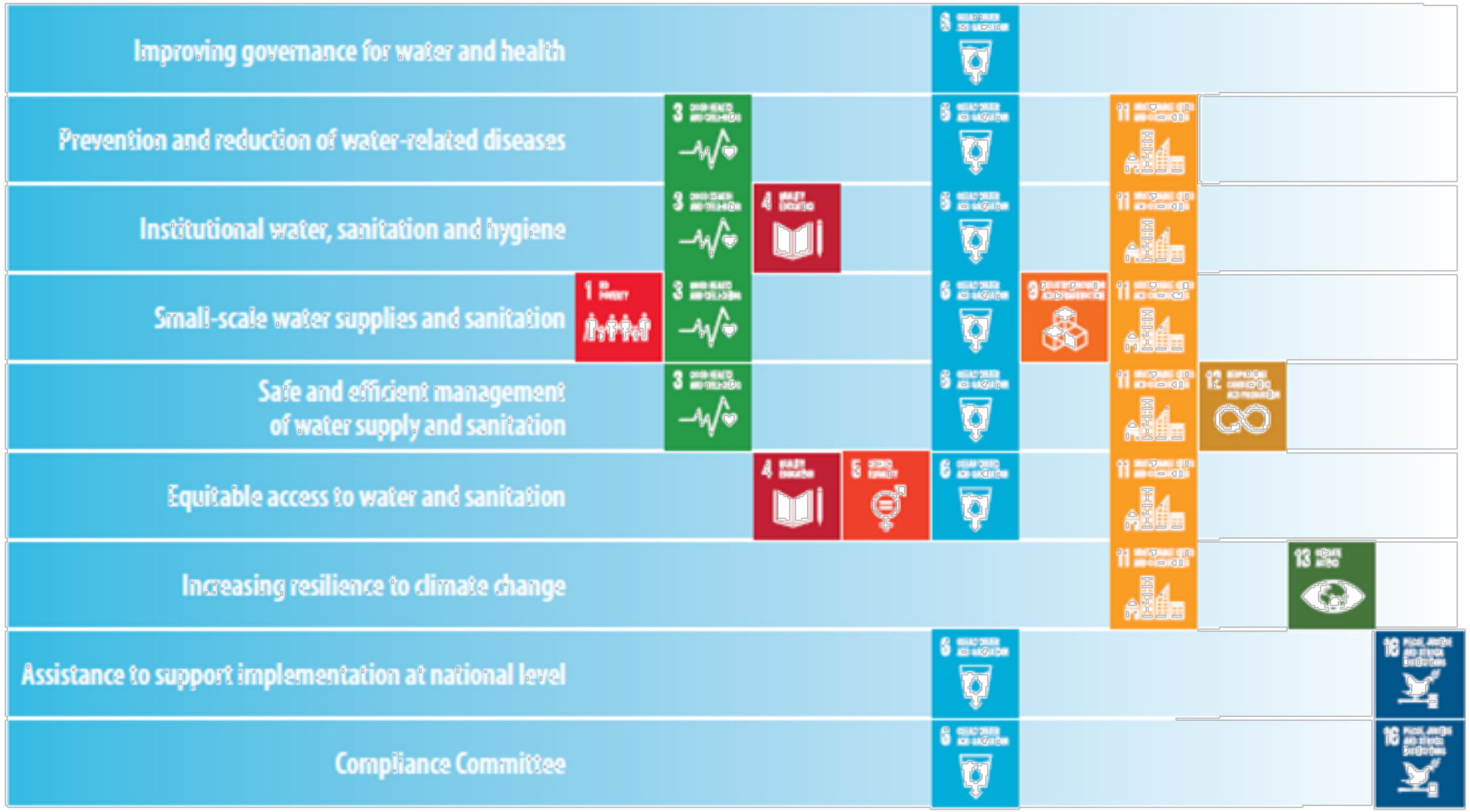
Areas of work under the Protocol



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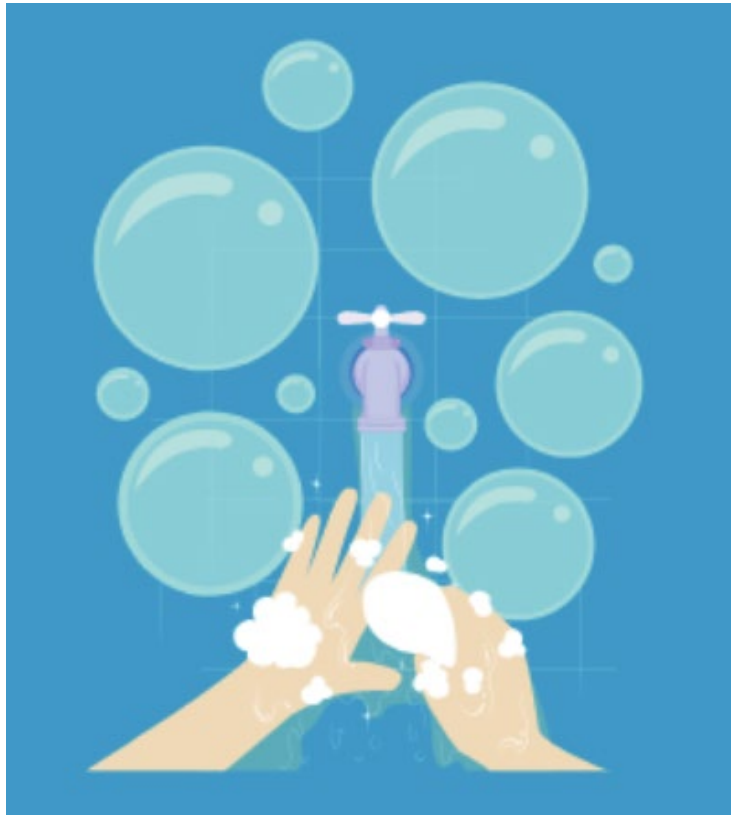
WASH and COVID-19

- Safe and sufficient water is key to protecting human health during infectious disease outbreaks
- Frequent and correct hand hygiene prevents COVID-19 infection
- Need for a continuous supply of safe water and sanitation systems that are operational, in all settings and under challenging conditions
- Need to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized
- Environmental surveillance in wastewater: early warning, second wave detection



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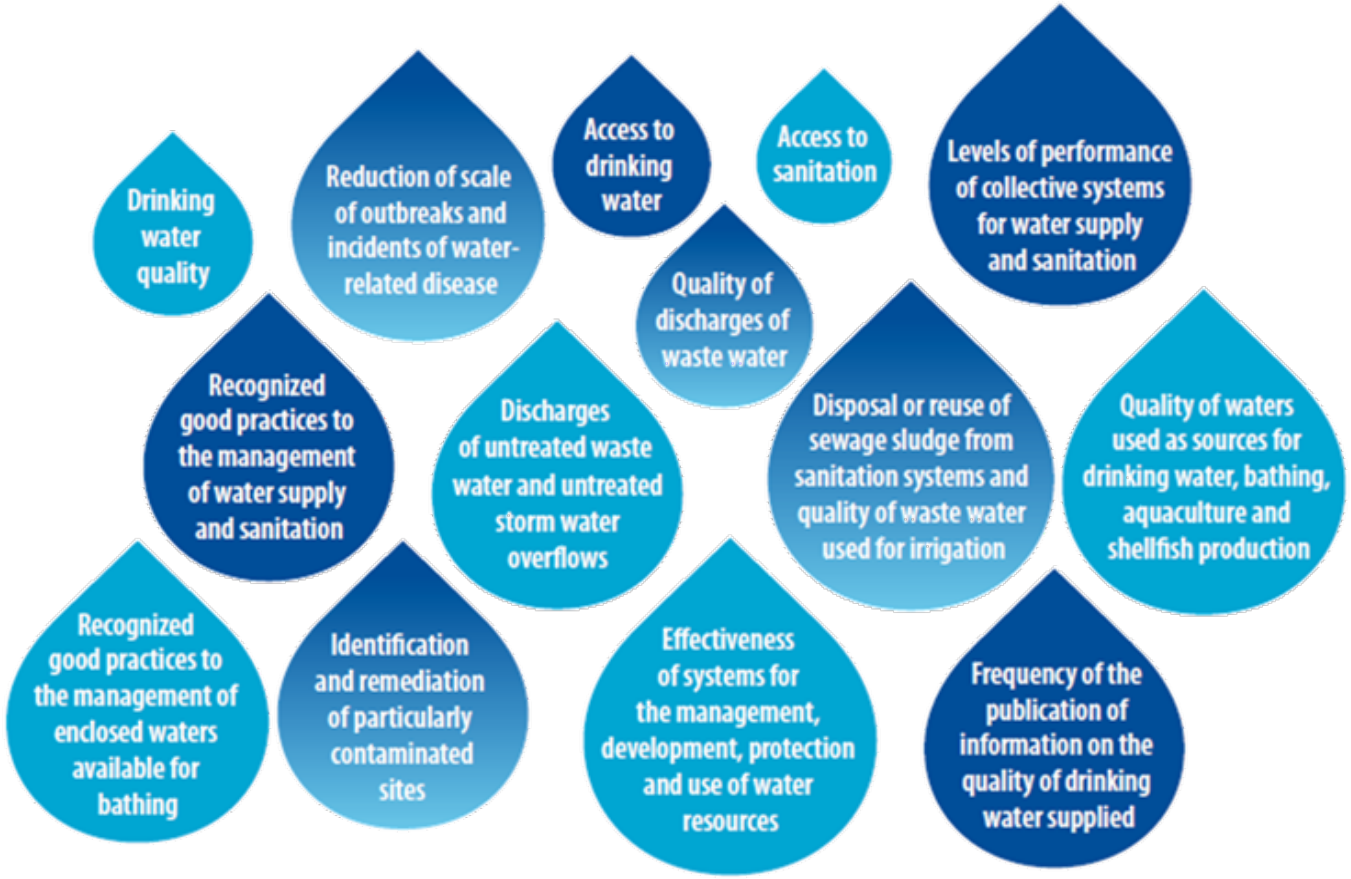
What does the Protocol offer?

Target setting and reporting mechanism – brings together the environment and health sectors to set national objectives through an **accountable** and **participatory** process.

- ✓ Intersectoral coordination mechanisms
- ✓ Baseline analysis
- ✓ Targets and indicators
- ✓ Official adoption
- ✓ Action plans
- ✓ Monitoring progress
- ✓ Review and report



Protocol targets as a means to achieve the SDGs while integrating COVID-19

Coherence of approaches between **Protocol and 2030 Agenda:**

- ✓ Address the whole water and sanitation cycle
- ✓ Focus on intersectoriality
- ✓ Focus on inequalities
- ✓ Define ultimate objectives and countries set their own targets
- ✓ Follow-up and review of progress

Concrete targets for **COVID-19 prevention, recovery and future preparedness** can be set on:

- ✓ Equitable access to water and sanitation
- ✓ WASH in schools and health-care facilities
- ✓ Environmental surveillance in wastewater
- ✓ Any other WASH aspect covered by Protocol target areas

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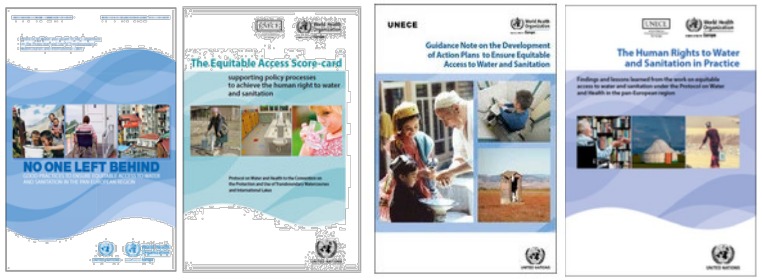
What does the Protocol offer?

Knowledge hub on water, sanitation, hygiene and health

- **Thematic activities:** capacity building, evidence-based research, technical guidance
- **International exchange of experience:** between governments and with the expert community

Equitable access to water and sanitation



Institutional WASH

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Thank you!

More information on the Protocol is available here

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