

Key messages on hygiene and access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region (gaps and progress)

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Water, sanitation and hygiene in the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Access to safe water** in sufficient quantity **and adequate sanitation** are the first line of defense against the new coronavirus
- Good **hand hygiene** is considered the primary tool in infection prevention and control
- Many global and regional commitments and instruments incorporate the goal of assuring **universal and equitable access** to water, sanitation and hygiene for all (e.g. HRWSD, SDG 6, Protocol on Water and Health, Ostrava/Parma declaration, EU DW)



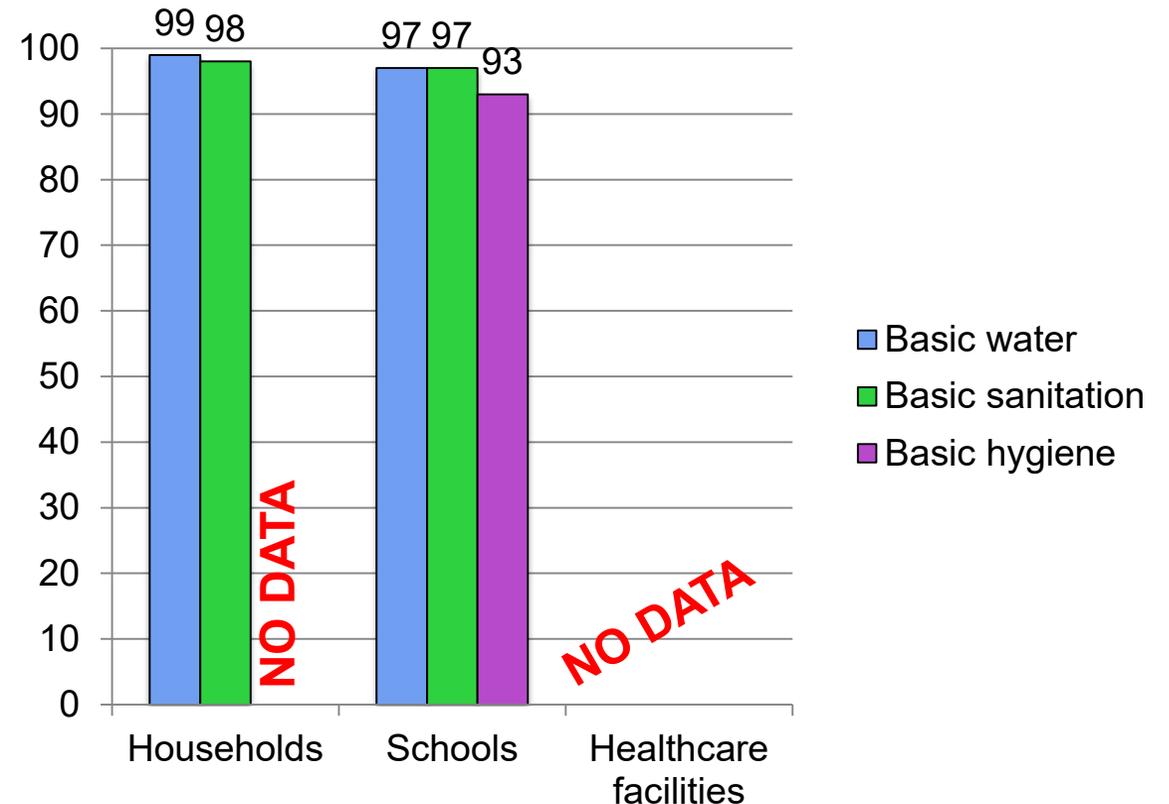
These initiatives receive an extra momentum from the COVID pandemic

- For efficient prevention, safe WASH should be accessible in **homes, schools, healthcare facilities, workplaces and public places**
- Increasing evidence shows that the pandemic hits the most vulnerable more severely – highlighting the importance of ensuring **equity**
- The **Protocol on Water and Health** aims to ensure safe WASH for everyone. It is a strong instrument for providing policy and technical support to countries in the pan-European region to take action on improving equitable access to WASH in homes and institutions



Water, sanitation and hygiene in the pan-European region

- Though figures on access to basic water and sanitation services are high...
- We don't know how many people have at least basic hand hygiene facilities at home
- No baseline data is available on WASH in HCF in the Region
- Almost 1 in 10 schools have no handwashing facility on premises
- Limited information on the inequities behind the regional/national averages: existing data shows large disparities



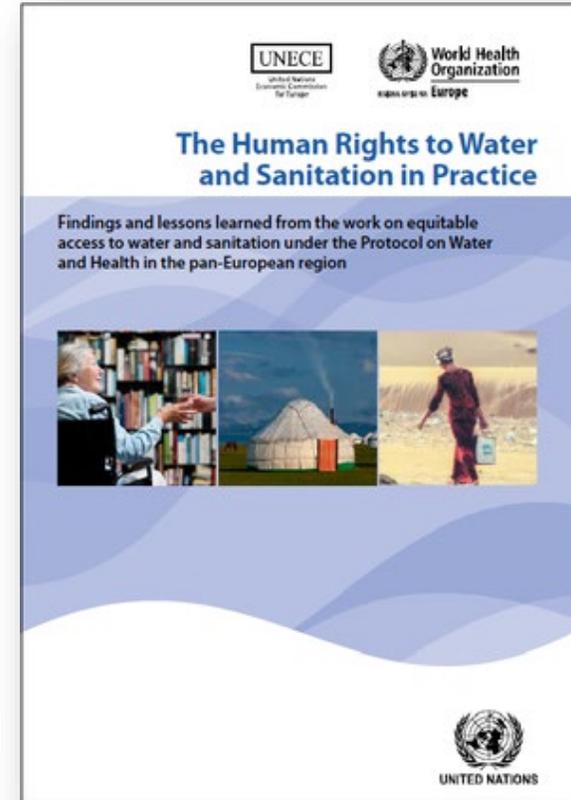
- Essential data are missing due to the lack of harmonised monitoring
- Need for intensified national action to address inequities in access to safe WASH

Progress under the Protocol in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation

- In the pan-European region, **12 countries** have undertaken a **self assessment** to **take stock of the situation** and **identify equity gaps in access to water and sanitation**-looking at the following aspects



- Existing **governance framework** in place to address equity
- **Geographical disparities** in WASH access
- **Barriers** faced by **vulnerable and marginalized** groups in WASH access
- **Affordability** concerns in accessing WASH



<https://bit.ly/37xRW1K>



Examples of measures taken by countries to address equity gaps identified through self-assessments:



FRANCE

Equitable access action included in the 2015–2019 National Plan on Health and Environment. New law adopted to improve the affordability of water and sanitation services.



SERBIA

Action plans (2019–2021) to ensure equitable access in the regions of Sumadija and Pomoravlje endorsed by the Inter-ministerial body.



HUNGARY

National Building Code amended to reflect the minimum requirements and standards for access to water and sanitation in buildings.



UKRAINE

Amendments regarding sanitation incorporated into the final version of the Drinking Water Law.



REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Plumbing systems built to supply safe drinking water 24 hours a day to 67,000 villagers in rural areas.



AZERBAIJAN

Water supply established in 316 rural and urban secondary schools.



PORTUGAL

Affordability indicator included in the annual report of the water and sanitation regulator.



NORTH MACEDONIA

Ongoing improvement of facilities for menstrual hygiene management in cafés, bars and restaurants in Skopje in partnership with the professional union.



BULGARIA

Ongoing development of a regulatory framework for sanitation in schools by the recently established national working group under the Ministry of Health.



ARMENIA

National 2018–2020 Equitable Access Action Plan endorsed. Ongoing revision of Water Code to include the definition of vulnerable and marginalized groups.



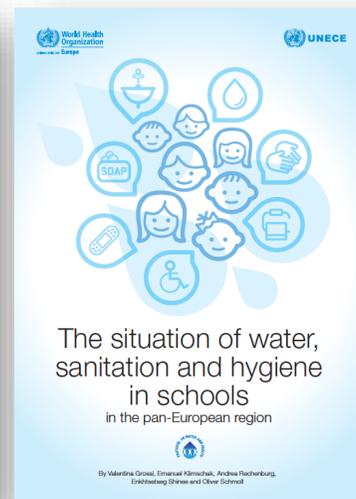
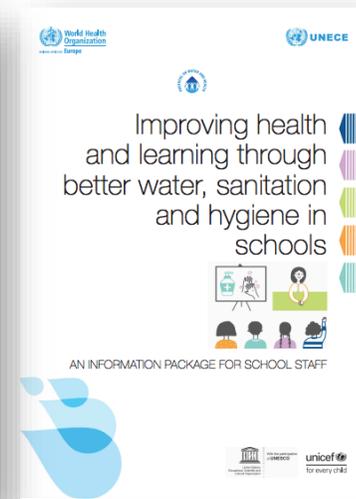
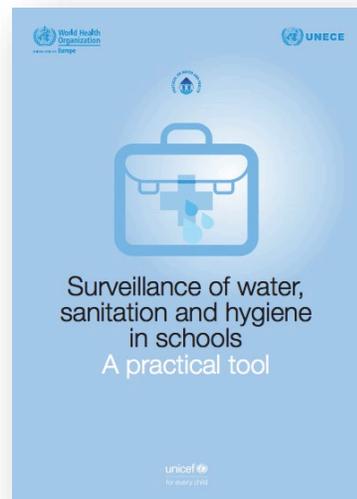
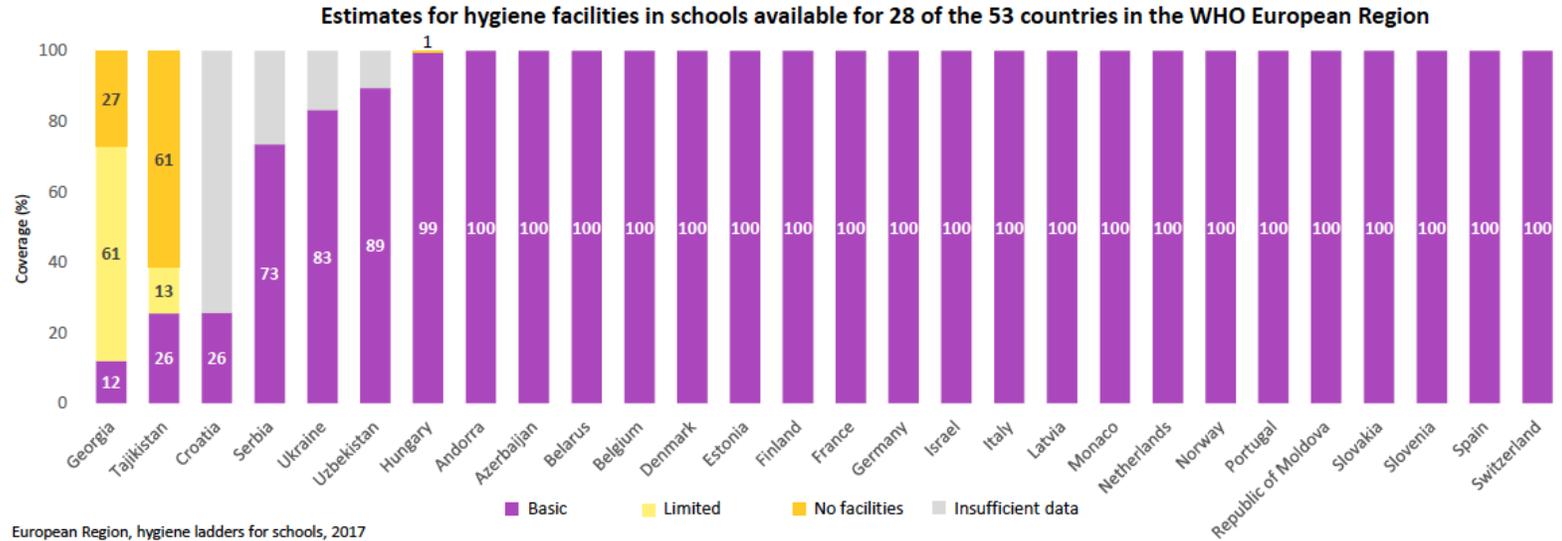
SPAIN

Seven public fountains installed in the city of Castelló to guarantee access to drinking water.



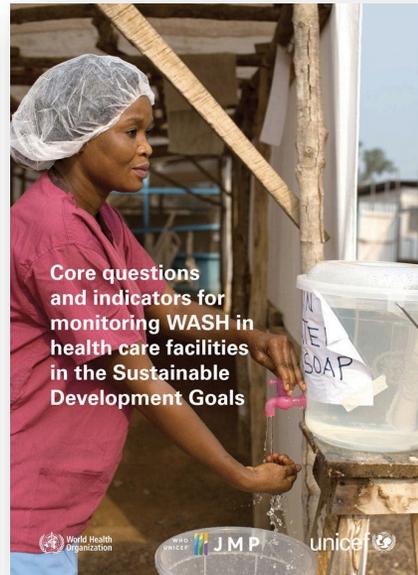
Hygiene in schools

- Pre-COVID situation: 9 out of 10 schools report handwashing facilities with water and soap within 5 m of the toilets
- COVID calls for additional measures (e.g. hand washing or disinfection station at the entrance)
- Tools developed under the Protocol assist awareness raising, situation analysis and improvement



Hygiene in healthcare facilities

- Hand hygiene is a primary tool for prevention of healthcare associated infection
- Basic service: handwashing with soap and water or handrub within 5 m of the toilets and at every point of care
- Baseline estimates for the European region are lacking, globally also limited
- Good hygiene practices are indispensable in HCF: “Five moments of hand hygiene”



- Countries where basic services are already achieved, should define national advanced indicators and targets
- Integrate hygiene indicators into national monitoring frameworks



Key messages: Country actions

Challenges related to WASH in homes and institution prevail across the region, though they differ in nature – might hinder COVID defence

Address the specific needs of different vulnerable and marginalised groups in improving access to WASH services, especially under the current pandemic situation

Hand hygiene (HH) is critical: promote universal HH, provide public HH stations and make their use obligatory at the entrance of public or private commercial buildings and public transport facility.

HCFs are at the heart of outbreak prevention: All measures should be taken to improve access to hand hygiene facilities and practices in health care facilities.

Countries can make use of the existing tools and guidance developed UNECE and WHO – among others, in the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health



Thank you for your attention

