

The Right to Safe Water and Sanitation in Schools

Implementing the Parma Ministerial Declaration and the Protocol on Water & Health
Side Event: SE 1, WECF "the Right to Safe Water and Sanitation in Schools"

Wednesday, 10 March 2010, 9:00 – 10:30am

Location: Parma, Italy

The Parma draft ministerial declaration says "we will strive to provide each child with access to safe water and sanitation in homes, child care centres, kindergartens, schools, health care institutions and public recreational water settings by 2020, and to revitalize hygiene practices"

This event focuses on the right to safe water and sanitation for schoolchildren and staff. The event will address the question how to implement and finance safe water and sanitation in particular for rural schools in the EECCA region – following the Protocol on Water and Health.

The right to safe water and sanitation: implementation in schools

The hygienic and sanitary conditions of many rural school toilets in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA-region) are in a very bad state. Many schools do not have any possibility for washing hands or drinking safe water. Hygienic conditions are often deplorable, and wellwater is often polluted by nitrates and faecal bacteria, impacting on pupils' health. Also in European Union member states, sanitation conditions in schools are often not hygienic, as surveys from several countries, including Germany and France, show.

Experience with 10 years of WECF school sanitation programmes in Eastern Europe and the EECCA region, has shown that local governments and national authorities remain mostly inactive, despite clear evidence provided on severe hygiene deficits in schools and pollution in drinking water. The lack of awareness, funding programmes and policy priorities are several of the barriers identified. The Water & Health Protocol, is one of the instruments to assure safe water and sanitation for all, including in schools. This side event will address barriers and catalysts to assure that the Parma Ministerial Declaration CEHAPE targets can be achieved.

The programme includes panel debates and discussions with representatives of the Water & Health Protocol financial instrument (AHPFM), the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organisation Europe, Ministries of Environment and Health for the EU-EECCA region, science and civil society. Speakers will a.o. present results of a survey on sanitation in German schools and results of demonstration school sanitation projects in the EECCA region and Water Safety Plans developed by rural schools.

Questions addressed by the speakers include:

- How to combine safe sanitation and environmental protection with the promotion of children's health and well-being at schools (Water & Health Protocol)
- Can safe and sustainable school sanitation be realised in rural areas lacking water supply and sewerage?
- How to finance safe and sustainable school sanitation?
- Can the development of Water Safety Plans with the involvement of schools contribute to the implementation of the Protocol on Water & Health?

Organised by:

WECF – Women in Europe for a Common Future (Netherlands/France/Germany)

In cooperation with :

- UNDP Regional Centre for Europe & CIS
- WHO-Europe, Water and Sanitation
- Mama 86 Ukraine
- European Eco-Forum
- Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment
- German Toilet Organisation

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8:30 Registration and coffee

9:00 Introduction by the Chair

Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director, WECF – Women in Europe for a Common Future

9:10 How clean and safe are school toilets in Western-Europe and EECCA?

Claudia Wendland (Dr), WECF/ Hamburg University of Technology:

Results of the survey on school sanitation in Germany and impressions from other EU and EECCA school sanitation (photo / video)

Comments on the presentation:

Caroline Paul, Ministry of Health, France (t.b.c.)

9:30 Discussion: what are the barriers to safe sanitation and water in schools?

9:40 The Protocol on Water & Health: priority for school sanitation

Anke Stock (Dr), Women in Europe for a Common Future

9:50 Combining environmental protection with the promotion of human health and well-being: Sustainable school sanitation in Tajikistan, NGO ASDP-Nau

Comments on the presentation:

Anna Tsvetkova, MAMA-86, Ukraine

Elena Manvelian, Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment, Armenia

10:00 Water Safety Plans involving schools: offering a holistic framework for addressing the whole chain of cause-and-effect from environmental degradation to water-related health effects

Margriet Samwel, Water Coordinator, WECF – Women in Europe for a Common Future

Comments on the presentation:

Water centre, Teleorman, Romania

10:10 Panel Discussion „Implementing and Financing Safe Water and Sanitation in Schools“

- **UNDP**, Katy Norman/Jürg Staudenmann (t.b.c.)
- **WHO**, Roger Aertgeerts (t.b.c.)
- **BMZ**, Franz-B. Marré (t.b.c.)
- **GTO**, Thilo Panzerbieter (t.b.c.)
- **European Commission DG environment**, Helmut Bloech (t.b.c.)
- **UA delegation** (t.b.c.)

10:25 Summary & conclusion