

The focus on equity and access to safe and affordable drinking water and to adequate sanitation and hygiene “for all” is a key innovation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development compared to the past global ambitions. The concept of inclusiveness that is inherent to the objective of achieving a universal coverage with water and sanitation requires implementation of the five dimensions of the human rights to water and sanitation: availability of service, physical accessibility, quality and safety, affordability and acceptability. Access “for all” also means that “all” actors need to be involved in successfully attaining equitable access.

The event will build on the spirit and approach of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health which has been promoting universal access since its adoption in 1999 and is increasingly developing as the pan-European hub for bringing different stakeholders under its umbrella to share knowledge and good practice for attaining universality and equity.

The objective of the event is to address the need for an equity-based approach and illustrate how it can be integrated in programmes aiming at ensuring access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services for everyone in the pan-European region, in particular in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The event will provide a forum for participants for exchanging experience, analyzing the main problems ahead and jointly exploring building blocks for integrated solutions that would ensure information sharing and coordination of action among relevant stakeholders and involve non-water actors. The event will engage with participants to develop a better understanding of the means for a more effective response to the common challenge of ensuring equitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene for everyone.