



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP  
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM



Funded by  
the European Union

**Project: "Facilitating exchanges of experiences and best practices  
between Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova on equitable  
access to safe drinking water in frame of WHO/UNECE Protocol on Water  
and Health"**

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**Equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation in Armenia,  
Georgia and Moldova**



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the consultants of the NGO “Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment” (AWHHE) in partnership with Dniester River Keepers - Eco-TIRAS, Moldova, and International Center for Environmental Research (IFCER), Georgia, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

*“The project benefits from support through the EaP Civil Society Forum Re-granting Scheme (FSTP) to Members and is funded by the European Union as part of its support to civil society in the region. Within its Re-granting Scheme, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) supports projects of its members that contribute to achieving the mission and objectives of the Forum.*

*Grants are available for CSOs from the Eastern Partnership and EU countries. Key areas of support are democracy and human rights, economic integration, environment and energy, contacts between people, social and labour policies.”*

## **Short introduction**

The aim of the project is to strengthen the regional dimension and cooperation by collecting and disseminating information and sharing experiences in ensuring equitable access to water supply and sanitation in the 3 EaP countries (Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova) in frame of the UNECE/WHO Protocol on Water and Health (the Protocol) to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (the Water Convention). The project is led by AWHHE, in partnership with Eco-TIRAS and IFCER, where one country (Moldova) is party to the Protocol and has Association Agreement with EU, one country (Georgia) is not a party to the Protocol and has Association Agreement with EU, and one country (Armenia) is not a party to the Protocol and has a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with EU.

The case studies on equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova were developed by the project partners. The main purpose of these case studies was to analyze the problems of equitable access to safe drinking water in underserved rural settlements in Armenia, to examine the issues in Borjomi Municipality Resorts in Georgia and describe the progress achieved by Moldova after becoming a Party to the Protocol.

These case studies include an analysis of the current legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, projects implemented under the Protocol on Water and Health and situation of the drinking water and sanitation sectors in the project countries.

## **Moldova**

The country signed and ratified the Protocol on Water and Health from the beginning, having in mind the acute problems dealing with access to potable water and sanitation especially in rural areas, the necessity of renewal of obsolete sewage facilities are the primordial country necessities.

A priority problem identified is the high level of non-conformity of drinking water quality from underground sources and rural aqueducts, which presents risks for the health of the population.

Of the problems identified, the slow progress and the large discrepancy between urban and rural populations regarding access to safely managed water supply and sanitation systems are the most significant.

The active involvement to international cooperation permitted to develop and establish the national targets and target dates in sphere of the Protocol, and start the measures to improve the situation. The international assistance helped to develop the governmental Programme on implementation of the Protocol with the Action Plan, initially for 2016-2025, and later until 2030, to prioritize the actions and to direct internal and external financial sources to its implementation.

The National Programme regarding the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2016-2025 is a basic document for planning medium and

long-term strategic actions for the achievement of target indicators in accordance with the commitments of the Republic of Moldova to the Protocol until 2025, and its implementation constitutes a national priority with an effect on increasing the level of quality of life and implicitly the state of health of the population.

As risks in the implementation of the Programme were identified the insufficiency of the institutional capacities in the territories for the implementation of the measures, the insufficient involvement of some actors responsible for the implementation, the identification of financial resources in the areas not covered, the dependence of aquatic resources on climate changes.

Clearly expressed political will of the country with relatively low income permits to attract international financial sources to solve the issues dealing to access of quality potable water and sanitation.

## **Armenia**

The main purpose of the Armenian case study is to analyze the problems of equitable access to safe drinking water in underserved rural settlements in Armenia. Since 1 January 2017, water supply and sanitation (wastewater treatment) services have been provided by "Veolia Djur" CJSC. About 579 rural settlements out of 1002 settlements are not provided with centralized water supply and sanitation services and not included in the service area of water and sanitation companies. Water supply of the mentioned settlements is performed by the village municipalities.

This case study includes an analysis of existing legal frameworks, institutional arrangements of the country, and situation in the drinking water and sanitation sector of the Republic of Armenia, the current tariff policy, situation in target villages and recommendations to address the existing problems.

Issues related to water resources management, water supply, sanitation and health in Armenia are shared between different policy areas and require close cooperation between different bodies at both the policy and management levels. However, stakeholders in Armenia are not fully aware of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation and do not have sufficient capacity to respond to the challenges of access to potable water and sanitation.

One of the major challenges in the field of water supply and sanitation is the solution of the drinking water issue of around water self-supplied 579 settlements. Issues of equitable access due to geographical location have been discussed many times and are in the spotlight, but problem-solving activities are slow.

The analysis revealed such issues like: water security; demolished drinking water and sanitation systems; increase in system's electricity costs and, consequently, increase in maintenance costs; water availability; water quality; improper management of the systems, etc.

The establishment of mechanisms for ensuring equitable access to water supply and sanitation services for disadvantaged consumers and for isolated and vulnerable groups in terms of ensuring equitable access to water supply and sanitation, as well as the procedure for providing subsidies, will be developed by May 2025.

## **Georgia**

Equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation in Georgia: Well Water Inventory and Monitoring in Borjomi Municipality Resorts: Akhaldaba, Kvibisi, and Zanavi Georgia

The project's execution in Georgia was overseen by Grigol Abramia, Giorgi Dzamukashvili, and water specialist Alexander Mindorashvili.

An overview of the issues, the Borjomi Municipality's drinking water supply, and the main challenges were made in the case study.

The Well Water Inventory and Monitoring process came after the assessment of the body of knowledge regarding well water and sanitation, including safe drinking water.

On September 21, 2023, the ICFER laboratory provided the technical and chemical evaluations of the local drinking water well inventory. The outcomes met expectations.

Laboratory of Microbial Ecology G. Eliava Institute of Bacteriophages, Microbiology and Virology ([www.eliava-institute.org](http://www.eliava-institute.org)) provided a study on 5 samples of drinking water wells.

According to the obtained results, the most polluted samples were Kvibisi 1 and Kvibisi 2, moderately polluted - Akhaldaba 2, less polluted - Zanavi and practically clean - Akhaldaba 1 .

It is recommended to use a legally approved medicinal preparation called Intestibacteriophage to prevent intestinal sickness outbreaks by inserting the preparation into the wells.

But in order to get more noticeable effects from phage treatment, more thorough investigation is required to identify the main bacteria contaminating well water so that appropriate action can be taken.