



Italian Ratification of the WHO/UNECE Protocol on Water and Health Challenges and objectives for the development of the environment, climate, water and health sector

14-17 April 2026

organized by

ISTITUTO SUPERIORE DI SANITÀ
Centro Nazionale per la Sicurezza delle Acque (CeNSiA)

in collaboration with

REGIONE ABRUZZO



The conference is organized within the framework of the ACeS Project “*Water, Climate and Health: from the Environmental Protection of Resources to Access to Water, to Safe Use*” funded by the Italian Ministry of Health under the National Plan for Complementary Investments (PNC) to the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). Mission 6 – Component 1 – Investment E.1 “*Health–Environment–Biodiversity–Climate*” – Sub-investment 1.4 “*Promotion and funding of applied research with multidisciplinary approaches in specific Health–Environment–Climate intervention areas*”

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Rationale

The WHO/UNECE Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes was adopted in London, 17 June 1999, at the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. The Protocol is an international legally binding agreement for countries in the pan-European region, aimed to protect human health and well-being, both individual and collective, through sustainable water management and by preventing and controlling water-related diseases. The Protocol represents the instrument to be promoted for managing water as a single entity, encompassing environmental protection and aquatic ecosystems, improving water resource management and protection, and preventing, controlling, and reducing waterborne diseases.

The Ministry of Health has coordinated technical work for the presentation of the draft law for ratification of the Protocol (presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on November 10, 2023, approved by the Chamber of Deputies on October 14, 2025, and transmitted by the President of the Chamber of Deputies to the Presidency on October 16, 2025).

ISS, as Italian focal point, has contributed to the Protocol’s work, particularly in coordinating (together with the Kingdom of the Netherlands) the Programme area 7 of the Protocol, aimed to increase resilience to climate change.

In 2023, the applied research project entitled “*Water, Climate and Health: from environmental protection of resources to access to water, to safe use (ACeS)*” was launched. The project is part of the PNC – Mission 6, Sub-Investment 1.4: “*Promotion and funding of applied research with multidisciplinary approaches in specific Health–Environment–Climate intervention areas*” and is aimed to the ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health. As part of that project, it is organized this conference.



Aims

The conference will offer a platform for discussion with the Protocol's international scientific and coordination bodies. It will serve also as the first technical roundtable for stakeholders tasked with supporting the activities of the Permanent National Commission on Water and Health.

The event will focus on the range of water-related issues addressed by the WHO-UNECE Protocol on Water and Health, the targets to be met, and will establish the groundwork for strengthening institutional cooperation and enhancing networking.

Working method

Talks and roundtable. The event is structured into 7 sessions:

- Session 1 - 3 provide the overall framework on the Protocol on water and health, its obligations and the role of the WHO/UNECE secretariat in supporting implementation, point out Protocol Parties experience on local implementation, highlight roles, activities and initiatives of Italian national organizations related to the Protocol targets.
- Session 4 - 6 are focused on different types of water to which the Protocol applies. During each session, experts from both the health and environment sectors will share a perspective of law, project and activities ongoing, whose objectives and results could support the achievement of the objectives of the Protocol.
- Session 7 highlights the role of local authorities and the possible contribution of trade associations and the third sector to the implementation of the Protocol on water and health

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, April 14th (Auditorium Pocchiari, Istituto Superiore di Sanità)

09.00 Registration

10.00 Welcome remarks and opening address

Prof. Rocco Bellantone - President of the Italian National Institute of Health, Rome, Italy

Mr. Andrea Piccioli - Director General of the Italian National Institute of Health, Rome, Italy

Ms. Francesca Bernardini - Chief Transboundary Cooperation Section, UNECE, Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. Oliver Schmoll - Manager, Water and Climate Programme (WAC), WHO Regional Office for Europe, Bonn, Germany

Message from the Minister of Health

Message from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Message from the Minister of Environment and of Energy Safety



SESSION 1 - IMPROVING WATER AND HEALTH THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

Chair: A. Nardini

- 10.30 Introduction to the Protocol on Water and Health (obligations, targets setting, reporting and implementation in the UNECE region)
F. Bernardini
- 10.45 The Protocol on Water and Health – Guidance provided by WHO to support implementation
O. Schmoll
- 11.00 *Coffee break*

SESSION 2 - SHARING EXPERIENCES ON THE WATER AND HEALTH SITUATION IN EUROPE AND ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

Chairs: V. D. Di Giorgi Gerevini and L. Lucentini

- 11.30 The implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Hungary
M. Vargha
- 11.50 The implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Croatia
M. Ujević Bošnjak
- 12:10 The implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Kingdom of the Netherlands
A. M. de Roda Husman (online)
- 12.30 *Lunch break*

SESSION 3 - FIRST APPROACH OF CRITERIA, METHODS, AND OBJECTIVES FOR RATIFICATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH IN ITALY

Chairs: V. Fuscoletti and M. D'Alberto

- 14.00 Round table
- **V. D. Di Giorgi Gerevini**, Ministry of Health
 - **A. Martinelli**, Ministry of Environment and of Energy Safety
 - **L. Lucentini**, Italian National Institute of Health
 - **C. Maggi**, Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research
 - **F. Russo**, Veneto Region
 - **E. Gallo**, Italian Regulatory Authority for Energy, Networks and Environment
 - **S. Tersigni**, Italian National Institute of Statistics
- 16.00 Discussion
- 16.30 *Conclusion of the first day*



Wednesday, April 15th (Congress centre Agorà, Hotel St. Martin)

SESSION 4 - DRINKING WATER

09.30 *Keynote on water safety and water access*
J. Fawell

Chair: L. Lucentini

10.00 Status of implementation of Legislative Decree 18/2023
V. D. Di Giorgi Gerevini

10.15 Actions and critical issues for the implementation of the Legislative Decree 18/2023: Regions point of view
F. Russo

10.45 Actions and critical issues for the implementation of the Legislative Decree 18/2023: Water suppliers point of view
T. Tellini

11.15 *Coffee break*

Chair: D. Mattei

11.45 The development of the dynamic territorial registry of drinking water (AnTeA), pursuant to Legislative Decree 18/2023
F. De Luzi and M. Cerroni

12.15 Water Safety Plan approval
C. Sette

12.30 Water safety in buildings
G. Mattei

12.45 Water kiosks under the new regulatory framework
C. Marchiafava

13.00 Data use in environmental procedures for Drinking Water Safety Plans
E. Ferretti

13.15 *Lunch break*

Chair: E. Veschetti

14.00 Emerging chemical contaminants: a focus on PFAS
F. Nigro Di Gregorio

14.15 Emerging chemical contaminants: a focus on microplastics
E. Brancaleone



- 14.30 Ensuring safety from microbiological and virological hazards in drinking water under Legislative Decree 18/2023
L. Vitanza
- 14.45 Materials in contact with drinking water and ReMaF
C. Marchiafava
- 15.00 Discussion
- 16.00 *Conclusion of the second day*

Thursday, April 16th (Congress centre Agorà, Hotel St. Martin)

SESSION 5 - BATHING WATER

Chair: F. Ferrara

- 09.30 Twenty years since the entry into force of European Directive 2006/7 and the implementation of a bathing water safety plan
F. Ferrara and A. Muratore
- 09.45 Management Tools for assessment and characterization of pressures impacting bathing area
R. De Angelis
- 10.00 ACeS project as a tool to support the Protocol on Water and Health ratification in Italy
M. D'Alberto and V. Fuscoletti
- 10.15 ACeS project: overview and first results
E. Nerone, R. De Angelis, V. Fuscoletti, C. Mazziotti and D. Nuvolone
- 10.30 Lessons learned from a waterborne viral outbreak: implications for bathing water safety planning
M. Iaconelli
- 10.45 Towards a National Strategic Plan for the prevention of drowning in Italy
L. Notargiacomo and F. Ferrara
- 11.00 *Coffee break*

SESSION 6: WATER AND FOOD, WASTEWATERS AND REUSE

Chair: G. La Rosa

- 11.30 European and national regulatory aspects
A. Martinelli
- 11.45 Microbiological Risk Management of Water Used in Primary Production
R. Briancesco and S. Murtas
- 12.00 Risk Management Plans and Water Reuse: Case Studies
S. Murtas and R. Briancesco



- 12.15 Wastewater-based epidemiology for respiratory and emerging viruses: from COVID-19 onwards
P. Mancini and C. Veneri
- 12.40 Wastewater-based epidemiology for antimicrobial resistance surveillance within the National Action Plan on AMR (PNCAR)
G. Bonanno Ferraro
- 13.00 *Conclusion of the third day*
- 13.15 *Lunch*

Friday, April 17th (Congress centre Agorà, Hotel St. Martin)

SESSION 7: ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND THE THIRD SECTOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

Chair: Luca Lucentini and Marcello D'Alberto

- 09.30 Activities and initiatives of the Local Water Service Governing Bodies, in the context of the objectives and aims of the Protocol on Water and Health
F. Spinicci
- 09.45 Activities and initiatives of the National Association of Land Reclamation and Irrigation Water Management Consortia, in the context of the objectives and aims of the Protocol on Water and Health
M. Battistoni
- 10.00 Activities and initiatives of coastal municipalities of the Abruzzo Region – Costa dei Trabocchi, in the context of the objectives and aims of the Protocol on Water and Health
E. Di Giuseppantonio
- 10.15 *Coffee break*
- 10.45 Round table
- ***M. Lorenzoni***, Italian Association for Water Quality (AIAQ)
 - ***L. Tadini***, Aqua Italia/ANIMA Confindustria
 - ***S. Savini*** Greenpeace
 - ***A. Litta***, Italian Association of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE)
 - ***S. Di Vito***, Legambiente APS
 - ***F. Aliberti***, Environmental Foundation Marevivo – ETS
 - ***E. Alessi***, WWF Italy
- 12.30 *Conclusions*



SPEAKERS AND CHAIRPERSONS:

Eva Alessi, WWF Italy, Rome, Italy
Francesco Aliberti, Environmental Foundation Marevivo – ETS, Rome, Italy
Mattia Battistoni, National Ass. of Land Reclamation and Irrigation Water Management Consortia, Rome, Italy
Francesca Bernardini, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland
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GENERAL INFORMATION**Conference venue:**

April, 14 Auditorium Pocchiarì, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Viale Regina Elena, 299 – Rome
April, 15-17 Congress centre Agorà, Hotel St. Martin, Via S. Martino della Battaglia, 58 – Rome

Official language

The official language is **Italian**, with simultaneous **Italian-English** translation on the first day.

Target audience

The event is intended for National Health Service professionals, as well as for researchers, academia and other stakeholders from both the health and water/environment sectors.

Maximum number of attendees: 120

Registration and selection

Attendees are kindly requested to fill out the registration form available online at the following link:
[DOMANDA DI ISCRIZIONE evento ID: 050D26_P – Compila modulo](#) by **April 9th, 2026**.

Registration requests will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, up to the maximum number of participants allowed based on room capacity.

Participation in the event is free. Travel and accommodation expenses are the responsibility of the participant. At the end of the event, all participants should complete a quality assessment survey.

Certificates

A certificate of attendance will be provided to those who have attended at least 75% of the event. Attendance at the event will be recorded by entering and exiting the event in the appropriate attendance register.

This event does not provide any CME credits.

For any further information about the conference, please contact the Organizing Secretariat.