



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES

Drinking water and sanitation in a Nordic and Baltic perspective – common challenges and collaboration

Deputy Minister Nina Tangnæs Grønvold (MD)

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Welcome!



Foto: Bjørn Eivind Løfsgaard
Nasjonalt folkehelseinstitutt

Clean drinking water and sanitation

- Access to clean drinking water and appropriate sanitation are basic human needs,
 - and recently also recognized as human rights by the UN.
- Water and adequate sanitation are also linked to just about all the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Pan-European status – drinking water and sanitation

- In our Pan-European region more than 13.000 children under the age of 14 dies every year from water related diarrhea.
- At the same time Europe is now the only continent in the world where progress concerning sanitation challenges seems to be stagnating.
- At this seminar we will focus on the challenges that exists in the Nordic/Baltic region.

Quick overview of the status in Norway: Norwegian water sources

- Norway has numerous raw water resources available.
- Most of them are lakes and rivers (i.e. surface water).
- Challenge: Microbiological contamination of the surface water.

Quick overview of the status in Norway: Major challenges

- In general our drinking water- and waste water pipes are too old, and they are causing leaking problems.
We have to admit; renewal is far too slow.
- Some of our smaller public water supply systems are not up to hygienic standards.
- About 10 % of the population get their water supply from smaller private water supply systems, of which we know practically nothing about the water quality.

Quick overview of the status in Norway: New challenges - climate change

- Climate changes are likely to affect the quality of the surface water and the functioning of both the clean water- and sanitation pipe systems.
- The discharges from combined overflow systems will increase. As more storm water will enter the sewerage systems, the discharge from treatment plants will increase.
- We need to be prepared for the serious effects this might cause.

Quick overview of the status in Norway: Outbreaks of Giardia and Cryptosporidium

- We are working to avoid outbreaks such as Giardia in Bergen (Norway) in 2004, and Cryptosporidium in Østersund (in Sweden) in 2010. In both outbreaks several thousand people fell ill.
- We want it to be safe to drink tap water!

"The future we want"

- We want to be able to:
 - Continue to promote safe drinking water taken directly from the tap for all.
 - Recommend a lower intake of soft drinks added with sugar as part of the fight against obesity and diabetes 2.

Facing the challenges - giving attention to water and sanitation

- A new act on Public Health, in action from January 1st 2012, underlines the responsibility of the municipalities to secure safe water for all of its population.
- A coordination group with members from all relevant ministries has been established.
- A working group of relevant directorates is also being planned.
- Our Food Safety authority have intensified their inspections of drinking water supply.

Facing the challenges - giving attention to water and sanitation II

- Norway have taken an active part in the work of the Protocol on water and health.
- A proposal for a national "action plan" in the form of "targets" under the Protocol on water and health is being prepared and will be sent on a public hearing.

International cooperation in water and sanitation - the role of the Protocol on Water and Health

- A Protocol to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.
- Goal of the Protocol:
Improve the number of people having access to clean water and adequate sanitation.
- This seminar program will explore the possibilities the Protocol has to offer, both on the national and international level.

Why the Protocol on Water and Health?

- Mainly because the Protocol is:
 1. Offering an opportunity and a framework to analyze our national situation, and target its challenges.
 2. Helping to focus the attention of decision makers to actions that are needed.
 3. Creating a platform for bringing together different stakeholders.

Common challenges in our region

- So far I have focused on the situation in Norway to illustrate some challenges.
- It is my believe that we in the Nordic/Baltic area share some of the same problems and challenges.
- We share much of the same geography and population structure, with many small, and few large, water- and sanitization facilities.

Future cooperation in the region

- This conference is an unique opportunity to discuss what can be done to improve water management in the Nordic/Baltic region, and thus reduce water related diseases.
- And to discuss benefits from a closer cooperation – perhaps in creating a Nordic/Baltic network?



Thank You for Your attention!

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