

The EU and the 2008 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SANITATION

The United Nations has declared the year 2008 as the international year of sanitation to bring sanitation to the top of the agenda of policy-makers worldwide.

Objectives of the INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SANITATION (version May 2007):

1. Increase awareness and commitment from actors at all levels.
2. Mobilize governments and other sectors via rapid collaborative agreements.
3. Secure real commitments to review, develop and implement effective action.
4. Encourage demand driven, sustainable & traditional solutions, and informed choices.
5. Secure increased financing to jump start and sustain progress via commitments from national budgets.
6. Develop and strengthen institutional and human capacity.
7. Involvement of schools, community mobilization, the recognition of women's key role and stake.
8. Enhance the sustainability and therefore the effectiveness of available sanitation solutions.
9. Promote and capture learning to enhance the evidence base and knowledge on sanitation.

***I wish to receive further information
/an invitation:***

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WECF | Women in Europe for a Common Future

Brussels,
December 2007

EU Sanitation policies and practices

**In preparation of the 2008
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SANITATION**

Invitation to a High-Level Policy Event

Women in Europe for a Common Future will organise in December 2007, in participation with EWP and Kiwa Water Research a **high-level Policy Event on the need for better EU legislation on:**

- **Onsite wastewater and human waste treatment**
- **Safe reuse of excreta and grey water in agriculture**

The WECF high policy event will bring together 50-100 key experts from all sectors and different EU Commission representatives for a 1-day event in Brussels.

Safe management of wastewater and excreta is a challenge worldwide, including within the European Union. In some of the EU member states 40% of the population do not have access to safe wastewater systems. The results are high morbidity especially among children, as well as significant water pollution. New approaches are needed in the EU, allowing for a broader scope of management, financing and technological options, better suited to the different needs across the EU.

The EU, as a main donor, has a key role to play in assuring the sustainability of the MDG-7 sanitation programmes, and in sharing lessons learned from the Eastern and Western European region with partners internationally.

Photo: Children in new EU member states often have no safe sanitation or drinking water

Photo: Self-made cement urine diverting toilet used in rural areas of Eastern Europe is hygienic and prevents groundwater pollution



The High-Level Sanitation Event will address the following questions:

- Market-pull or technology push? Who decides what is sustainable, affordable and acceptable?
- Are EU development funds addressing the poorest people with the highest need for water supply and sanitation?
- Does EU research policy address the needs of problem- owners or does it address the market potential of technology suppliers?
- Does EU regulation contribute to an enabling framework for the re-use, recycling potential of water and valuable products as bio-solids/urine?
- Does EU policy in general stimulate solutions that create local business activities, create jobs and contribute to wealth and health of the poorest people?
- Can innovative decentralised, problem-owner driven and sustainable solutions contribute to the Lisbon goals of European competitiveness?

Sanitation, hygiene and water pollution are a challenge worldwide and in the European Union. There are 2.7 billion people without basic sanitation worldwide. Children especially continue to pay the price in lost lives, missed schooling, in disease, malnutrition and poverty. Within the European Union, at least 20 million people live in communities with unsafe sanitation and wastewater management.

The European Union has a key role to play in supporting to reach the Millennium, Development Goal on Sanitation, as well as addressing the sanitation challenge within its own borders. What priorities should the EU set for the International Year of Sanitation?

The High-Level Sanitation Event aims to:

- Ask more attention for people in rural areas worldwide and in Europe
- Address enabling factors for introduction of sustainable sanitation and water supply
- Promote adequate and stimulating incentives from EU e.g. legislation and guidelines
- Re-assess the current focus of DG regional development programmes to include rural areas and small supplies
- Re-assess the current focus of EU research policy FP7 to include rural areas and small supplies
- Call for active involvement of local businesses and NGO's
- Present end-user driven solutions vs. consultancy solutions: bottom-up vs. top-down

The high-level sanitation event will:

- Present lessons learned from waste water investments in new member states
- Present lessons on the need for waste water and nutrients re-use in agriculture
- Present lessons learned from ground- and surface water pollution from conventional soak-aways and pit latrines
- Present innovate developments in the area of sustainable sanitation for onsite and decentralized, flexible systems
- Present lessons learned from successful involvement of communities and local private sector in sanitation programmes
- Present policy recommendations for EU policies in the areas of:
 - Regulation and incentives for onsite sanitation and wastewater systems
 - Financing schemes for sanitation and wastewater systems in new member states
 - EU aid for sanitation programmes in developing countries/countries in transition
 - Regulation for a safe use of waste water, urine and faeces in agriculture