

Water Inclusion – Hátrányos helyzetű csoportok vízhez való hozzáférése

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Socially inclusive water supply policies are crucial for sustainable development and effective water management. Making water and sanitation accessible and affordable is not only a matter of expanding market economy, smart (hi-tech) technology, droughts and climate-change policies, and effective water governance, but it is central to living a life in dignity and upholding human rights.

Hungary has one of the largest connection rate of the drinking water system in the region as officially 95% of the total population is connected to the centralised public water supply available. Although the majority of water service companies are publicly owned, due to the priority of maintaining high standards of services, over 50% of the population pays more than 3% of their household income, which is the maximum cost recommended by the Government Decree. However, the poorest 10 % of the Hungarian population pays 8.6% of their income for water and sanitation services. There is no comprehensible social tariffs system introduced by the government for supporting these households.

The report focuses on the limited access to the affordable quality water and sanitation due to interference of social factors as housing segregation, housing informality, lack of land titles, unaccomplished construction permits, lack of financial resources for water supply connections and regular water fees, and ineffective policies of local authorities, and ethnic discrimination. All across Europe – including Hungary – there is a growing number of people experiencing challenges in the access to clean water and sanitation due to these social factors.

The report's objectives is to map and analyse the role of social factors influencing in an effective water supply. Water providers – private or public ones – aspiring deliver effective water supply in Europe, including Hungary, have so far been left without comprehensive legal and policy frameworks that would provide authority in dealing with water and sanitation provisions for the socio-economically disadvantaged and socially excluded groups in the society.