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REPUBLIKËS SË SHQIPËRISË
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PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
GENEVA

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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the latter's note IW/MB/NM of 26 February 2007 (Human rights and access to water) has the honour to attach herewith the information of the Albanian Government on points a, b, e and f of the questionnaire.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 14 May 2007

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

GENEVA

a. Albania has affluent water reserves, however water supplies in almost all urban areas is scarce, due to difficult conditions of drinking water supply infrastructure (scheduled supply 2-3 times a day).

Water supply in Albania is carried out using natural resources, drilling wells, water treatment stations and individual wells. These water resources are in general organised in water-supply systems, not excluding cases where few villages use previously untreated water directly by rivers.

The Government has placed access to safe-drinking water and sanitation as one of its priorities, owing to the fact that their impact is not only confined to the increase of hygiene and welfare of the population, but also to the protection of the environment. This will create optimal living conditions for the population and will reduce diseases of water origin.

Our objective is to achieve access with supplies of safe drinking water to the entire population, living in urban or rural areas.

The reform and decentralisation of the water-supply sector in Albania, which is ongoing aims at transferring all assets and responsibilities to local government units.

b. Water-supply and sanitation legal framework is under review and approximation with the European Union *acquis communautaire*. Adopted laws and by-laws related to safe drinking water and sanitation are provided below:

- Law no. 8934, dated 5.9.2002 "On Environment Protection";
- Law no. 8093, dated 21.03.1996, amended by law no. 8605 of 20 April 2000 "On Water Reserves";
- Law no. 7643, dated 02.12.1992 "On the State Sanity Inspectorate", amended by law no. 9635 of 6 November 2006 "On Public Health";
- Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 145, dated 26.02.1998 "On the adoption of the hygienic health regulation on the quality control of drinking water, projection, building, utilisation and supervision of drinking water supply systems.
- State standards on the characteristics of drinking water, adopted by the Standardisation Council, which entered into force on 01.03.1998 (STASH).
- Law no. 8102, dated 28 March 1996 "On the regulatory framework of the drinking water supply sectors, elimination and treatment of the impure waters", amended by law no. 9352 of 3 March 2005.

The abovementioned laws aim at defining standards for the water-supply and sanitation enterprises with regard to the quality of producing, water resources and environment protection.

e. Based on the above laws the quality of drinking water throughout the country is carried out according to the new monitoring scheme. The monitoring ensures a qualitative drinking water for the entire population covered by the water supply infrastructure. Pursuant to the Regulation adopted by the Council of Ministers Decision no. 145 of 26 February 1998 and Law no. 7643, dated 02.12.1992 on the State Sanity Inspectorate the latter is tasked with monitoring the drinking water quality and decides whether, or not the supplied water meets the approved standards. In case of a non-safe drinking water the Inspectorate takes necessary measures to prevent manifestation and spreading of communicable diseases.

The health system collects and processes all statistical data on communicable diseases. For communicable diseases with a water origin, pursuant to the disease the statistics are: Urgent, Alert (weekly) and monthly.

Different workshops, conferences and joint trainings with NGOs, supported by USAID, European Commission and World Bank have taken place, focusing to communication with the public, with the objective of ensuring awareness of different actors in the sectors of drinking water control. Through sensitizing the population in rural areas of Durres has been ensured a better evaluation by the community of the necessity of respecting technical-sanitation norms for drinking water supply. This represents however a longer process, which will have to continue and institutionalise under the local government.

f. The drinking water supply situation in the country has been improving continuously. To illustrate; in 1997 the population was generally supplied for 2-3 hours a day, while in 2005 the minimum supplies in districts are 5 hours a day. Positive examples are districts of Korca, Librazhd, Gramsh and Erseka, which have access to drinking water throughout the day, while other districts, such as Shkodra, Lezha and Vlora have access to drinking water for 20 hours a day.
