



The Challenge to implement Affordable and Sustainable Sanitation in the new EU countries Romania and Bulgaria

Review of experiences with source oriented sanitation based on urine diverting toilets

1. Lack of adequate sanitation in rural areas of Romania and Bulgaria

Situation in the new assessed EU countries

Bulgaria's total population is 7,7 million and 3 million people live without adequate wastewater treatment

Romania's population is 20,4 million and 10 million people live without adequate wastewater treatment

The unhygienic situation in especially rural areas threatens public health and disconnects people from economic growth

The problem with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC

- In the European Union, the most important regulation for wastewater management covers settlements with more than 2,000 inhabitants. Billions of Euros are needed for its implementation.
- In Central & Eastern European (CEE) countries, 30 million people live in rural settlements with less than 2,000 inhabitants who are not covered by the directive.
- After implementation of the 91/271/EEC, at least 20 million people in the EU (CEE countries) still lack safe sanitation.

2. Sanitation based on dry urine-diverting toilets

What is affordable and sustainable sanitation for rural areas?

- Flush toilets, if there is no reliable water supply?
- Flush toilets, using at least 15,000 litres of drinking water per person per year?
- Flush toilets, without sewerage system thus polluting groundwater?

Why are immediate affordable and sustainable solutions a need for the rural areas?

- Because of the high unemployment and poverty rate in the rural areas of e.g. Romania and Bulgaria
- Because in 2005, 22% of Romanians, in particular, in the rural areas, lived below the poverty level
- Because of the absence of a reliable central drinking water supply
- Because people often rely on unsafe, ground water polluting pit latrines or septic tanks



→ What is affordable and sustainable sanitation?



→ In absence of a reliable drinking water supply bottles with water are deposited for flushing the toilet



→ A soilfilter can be an affordable and sustainable solution for decentral wastewater treatment in rural areas

3. Experiences of WECF in Romania and Bulgaria



→ 2004-2006, the first dry urine-diverting toilets for a school, town hall and households in Romania



→ 2006, the first dry urine-diverting toilets and soil filters for a cultural centre and households in Bulgaria

Costs of a school UD toilet for 200 users: 7000 Euro (2004), cost of a household UD toilet, depending on the version: 250 –700 Euro (2006). A survey in a school after one year with dry urine-diverting toilets did reveal that 94% of the children find the toilets easy and pleasant to use; 94% never see flies in or around the UD toilets.

The sanitation demonstration projects show that even without access to piped water or sewage systems, the sanitary conditions can be improved easily and quickly, whereas the users have access to comfortable, hygienic, odour and fly free toilets

In 2008-2010, WECF and its partner intend to construct in Romania and Bulgaria additional dry urine-diverting toilets for 9 schools and for 90 households; however, the European and national regulations do not cover source separating sanitation systems.

4. Implementation and up-scaling of source separating sanitation in the EU

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) mentions:

“Treated wastewater shall be reused whenever appropriate” and “Sludge arising from wastewater treatment shall be re-used whenever appropriate”

Identified obstacles are

No EU regulation for the safe use of wastewater and excreta in agriculture
No focus on modern source separating systems, causing huge barriers for the acceptance and up-scaling of sustainable sanitation approaches

Conclusion

- On the European and National level source separating sanitation systems have to be promoted as a safe and sustainable approach for the management of human excreta
- To enable sustainable sanitation, the European Union has to develop a regulation on the safe use of excreta and wastewater in agriculture

What is WECF?

Women in Europe for a Common Future is a network of citizen's organizations and experts in 30 countries. WECF works for a sustainable future for our children.



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