Case Study on the Right to Water and Sanitation in Kosovo

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I. Abstract

Access to safe drinkable water for personal and domestic uses and proper sanitation is one of the biggest problems that the world’s population is facing this century. In most cases, especially in developed countries and countries in transition such as Kosovo, weak management must take most of the responsibility for the scarcity of drinkable water.

Kosovo is country in transition under UNMIK administration and the passing and implementation of national legislation related to water and sanitation services is ongoing. The Water Law was approved by the parliament only in 2004 and this stipulates the competent authorities for Water Management. However this law focuses mainly on the protection of water resources and pays little attention to access to water and sanitation as a human right. There is no institution or organisation responsible for regular monitoring and implementation of the right to water.

Only 44% of the overall population in Kosovo is connected to public water distribution system, which is the only water resource that is controlled and maintained by proper institutions and this number drops to 7% for rural population. People in rural areas rely on independent village water supply systems, which are not managed by any institutions because of the gaps in the legislation. About 60% of villagers are providing water from their own wells, which are mostly contaminated.

Only 28% of Kosovo’s population is connected to the sewage system and this figure drops to 3% in rural areas. There isn’t any waste water treatment plant in Kosovo. In fact, in 2005, a pilot project was developed for building the first waste water treatment plant, with capacity for 25 000 – 30 000 inhabitants.

Since the water situation in the rural areas of Kosovo is worse then in urban areas, in the last five years more has been invested in villages. Investments are made by government, international donors and the contribution of the citizens. Most of the budget is spent on the construction of small independent water supply systems and a very small amount is spent on sanitation services.

Education and information in the water sector is barely addressed, however while constructing independent water supply systems, the projects in the villages usually include education concerning water use and water cost, which aim to improve water management.

In general in Kosovo, there are no differences in the proportional use of the water according to gender or age. However as Kosovo’s women, especially in rural areas, are responsible for housework, it means they are primary water users and water providers.

Research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2000 shows that, “Kosovo has the highest morbidity rates in Europe in terms of disease transmitted by


water”. Water quality problems are bigger in villages, where about 80% of the population that use water from domestic wells consume contaminated water and this is because of the lack of adequate sanitation systems. Villagers usually use septic tanks which are not constructed to sanitary standards and they often contaminate drinking water from wells.

The sampling, control, maintenance and analysis of water quality of collective independent water supply systems is cheaper and is easier to maintain compared with private wells. So building an independent water supply system is one step toward better quality standards.

There is no general policy or process for ensuring that the needs of the poor are taken into account during the design of new water and sanitation infrastructure. However, often the needs of the poor are considered during the implementation of water infrastructure projects at the local level or by the communities. It is also important to mention that in Kosovo those villages inhabited by minorities, mainly Serbian and Roma, are given priority for implementation of the projects for the rehabilitation of infrastructure.

Despite foreign help, Kosovo today is a poor country, where more than 47% of the population lives in poverty, surviving on US$2 a day or less.

The government provides subsidies for low-income households through the Social and Welfare Ministry and this is around € 60 per family per month. Also, local authorities assist social cases with a document which makes them exempt from paying for a basic amount of water.

One of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals is to, “halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water and proper sanitation”. If human capacity building and investments in water sector continue at the same pace, it will be difficult to achieve these goals in Kosovo!!

### II. Introduction

At the beginning of this millennium, people became aware of the insufficiency of water resources for social-economic development, and in some cases, even for human existence. Kosovo as a country in transition is facing considerable problems concerning access to safe, sufficient, physically accessible and affordable water and sanitation services.

Since 1999, Kosovo has been under the administrative rule of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the final status of Kosovo is to be defined by the end of 2006. General legislation infrastructure started almost immediately after the elections for the first Assembly in 2002. Laws in general, including those in water sector are developed and approved by the Assembly of Kosovo and after their ratification by Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, they become law. Legislation for water and sanitation infrastructure in Kosovo is in the processing phases.

In Strasbourg on 15’16 October 2005, a two day workshop took place on the right to water, in preparation for the World Water Forum which will take place on 16 - 22 March
2006 in Mexico. The workshop on the right to water highlighted the differences between EU countries and countries in transition regarding the implementation of the right to water. This variation comes from political, economical, cultural and other similar factors.

During this workshop, the representative from Kosovo contributed with the presentation, “The Right to Water, a Perspective from Kosovo”, which is further developed in this case study.

III. National Context

Country Background
Kosovo is located in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula and it is bordered by Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro. It has population in the range of 1.9-2.4 million. The last population census conducted in 1981 estimated Kosovo’s population at 1.6 million. The latest estimate in 2001 by OSCE puts the number at 2.4 million, with about 60% of the population living in rural areas. Half of the population is under 25 years old. The density is more then 190 inhabitants per square kilometre, which makes it one of the highest in Europe. Kosovo’s surface area is 10 877 km² and it is politically divided in 31 municipalities.

The majority of the population (more then 90%) is composed of ethnic Albanians while the largest minority is Serbian. Other ethnic groups include Bosnians, Turks, and Roma, which constitute a small fraction of the population.

During 1989–1999, Serbians excluded the Albanian majority from political and social events in Kosovo and this politics of discrimination saw the retrenchment of a huge number of Albanians from the public and social sectors.

During the Serbian regime, Kosovo’s infrastructure showed the signs of serious negligence of investments. Since the conflict ended in 1999, the economy of Kosovo has been supported by donor assistance to restart its economy. However, despite foreign help, Kosovo today is a poor country, where more than 47% of the population lives in poverty, surviving on US$2 a day or less. Thirteen percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, lacking access to safe water and health services and faces the prospect of not living to see their 40th birthday.¹

Legislation Infrastructure

The Administration of Kosovo is based on the United Nations Security Council Solution 1244 of 1999 and the subsequent constitutional framework for self-government (UNMIK/REG/2001/19). The body of applicable law in Kosovo can be divided into three parts:

• Firstly, there are the regulations issued by the Special Representative of UN Secretary General.
• Secondly, there are the laws passed by the Kosovo Assembly and promulgated by the Special Representative under the transferred powers.
• Finally, based on United Nation Mission in Kosovo UNMIK/REG/1999/24, there are the laws applicable in the territory of Kosovo before 22 March 1989.

Since Kosovo is country in transition under UNMIK administration, the passing and implementation of national legislation related to water and sanitation services is ongoing. So far, the legal framework comprises:
• Environmental Protection Law, approved in 2003,
• Water Law, (2004/24) approved in 2004,
• Environmental Strategy of Kosovo approved in 2000,
• National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) is ongoing.

Legal and institutional framework and access to water and sanitation services
There are various different institutions which have been built since 1999 concerning the water and sanitation sector. The Water Law, Chapter III, article 16 stipulates that:
“The competent authorities for Water Management in Kosovo are:
• the Government;
• the Water Authority of Kosovo;
• Provisional Institutiones of self-Government (15 Ministries);
• River Basin District Authorities; and
• Municipalities.”

The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) is responsible for determination and implementation of policies for water development in Kosovo, management of water resources, drafting of water strategy plans and other plans for water management according to the Water Law. They are also the owner of water resources.

According to the new Framework for Reform of Local Self-government and Decentralisation, in the water sector, municipalities are responsible for the establishment and operation of the public infrastructure and management of water sources at local level. They are also responsible for access to information, designation and planning for the corporatisation of water utilities. Decentralisation as a process in general is ongoing and decentralisation in the water and sanitation sector is expected to start soon.

Water and sanitation services
According to NEAP (draft, October 2005), Kosovo’s industrial uses represent about 30% of total water use, agriculture about 55% and water for personal and domestic uses is about 15% of overall water use. NEAP also indicates that about 56% of Kosovo’s population has access to improved drinking water supply, which is mostly provided by
Public utilities. Official data released in 2003 indicates that only 44% of the population has been connected to public water systems, while these figures drop to 7% in rural areas. In the latter areas, about 60% of the population relies on water supply from private wells, maintained by their owners. Unfortunately, most of the wells are contaminated, making the water undrinkable.

Regarding sanitation, in 2003, only 28% of the population was connected to the sewage system and this figure drops to 3% in rural areas. The population not connected to the system mostly uses septic tanks. These tend not to be constructed according to sanitary standards and represent serious risks for well-water contamination.

Public water suppliers come under the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA); however, their status is not defined yet. Seven regional companies (28 public utility suppliers of water and wastewater services) provide water and wastewater services for 31 municipalities, mainly for the cities. Also, there are about 300 small independent water supplies in villages (each supplies around 1 000 inhabitants). Management responsibility for these small independent water suppliers is not defined due to gaps in the legislation. Usually, during the construction of small water systems, a water village committee is appointed. When the system is finished, this committee has no further obligations. However, there are some good examples of how the management problems of a small water supply system have been solved, for instance:

“After completion of the water system in Mogille village, the selected municipal committee in Viti has proceeded with technical acceptance and the system has been certified. The municipal public utilities department in Viti and representatives of Mogille village community have discussed different options to ensure the operation, maintenance and management of the system. They have finally agreed to establish a management committee, composed of four village community representatives previously trained by a NGO and one municipal official from the Public Utilities Department (PUD) in Viti.

They also agreed to employ one technician and one person for distribution and collection of bills. The PUD of Viti agreed to open a bank account on behalf of the management committee, necessary for the operation, maintenance and management of the Mogille water system and money for maintenance will come from water consumers. They have also identified a need for the preparation of individual contracts that must be signed with all water consumers in the village”.

Most of the small independent water suppliers have been built since 1999 and financial resources have come from different donors, municipalities and from the citizens themselves, for example,

“The total supply system in Rashinca and Vojnofc villages cost € 329 544. From this amount €229 901 was financed by USAID, the community has contributed € 59 110 and the municipality has made up the remainder of the costs”.

Investments in water and sanitation services

Since the water situation in rural areas is worse than in urban areas, more has been invested in villages in the last five years. Between 1999 – 2004, €31.5 million has been invested in the water and sanitation sector in 25 municipalities of Kosovo and of this
amount, €11.5 million has been invested in urban areas and €20 million in rural areas. Investments are made by government, international donors and the contribution of the citizens. Most of budget is spent on the construction of small independent water supply systems and a very small amount is spent on sanitation services.

Example:

Among the villages that benefited from different donors for the construction of small independent water systems are the villages of Rashince and Vojnöc in Shtime Municipality. There are 2 688 villagers in Rashince and Vojnöc, of whom the majority are farmers. Water supply was identified as a priority need in 2002. Before the construction of the water system, the majority of the village population used water from individual wells, which usually dried up during the summer. The quality of water supplied from the wells was, in most cases, confirmed not to be safe for human consumption by the Institute of Public Health (IPH) in early 2002. In the same year an independent water supply system was built.

The water supply system in Rashince-Vojnöc is supplied by ground water with a pumping system, and water flows to households by gravity from a reservoir on a hill, with a capacity of 250 cubic meters (250 000 litres). It has a distribution network of 6.87 kilometres for Rashince and 5.7 kilometres for Vojnöc.

After the water system was completed in Rashince and Vojnöc village, the selected water committee has proceeded with technical acceptance and the system was certified. As was mentioned before, responsibility for the management of small independent water suppliers has not yet been defined because of gaps in legislation. During the construction of this water system, a village water committee was appointed. This committee does not have any further obligations since the system was completed. However, the Head of the Water Committee from Rashince village, is continuing to maintain this water system by carrying out chlorination, monitoring and maintenance of the water reservoir, pumps etc. on a voluntary basis.

IV. The Right to Water and Sanitation

a. General Issues

Water law is compiled by MESP in cooperation with experts from other ministries. Its main focus is on the protection of water resources and pays little attention to access to water and sanitation as a human right.

The Water Law, Article 5 stipulates “Equality in regard to Water Use: meaning that all persons have equal and proportional rights to Water Use according to this law”. However, the Water Law does not identify who is responsible to ensure equality with respect to water use. Due to the lack of definition of roles and responsibilities in the Water Law, several critical issues related to the water and sanitation sector have been identified during the first meeting of the Commission of the Association of Municipalities of Kosovo (AMK) in January 2005, including:

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2 (“Villagers must have Drinking Water” Oxfam GB in Kosovo, March 2005)
• “The Water Law does not make the relationship between MESP, the municipalities and the public utilities providing water services clear.
• There is no clear data on the percentage of citizens that have water supply, how many hours they have it for, and the quality of the water.
• Many villages have no management of their water supply; municipalities cannot intervene and also these villages are not a priority of the service providers.
• Water companies are providing services to illegal buildings; companies should only connect if the building has construction permission.
• MESP is seeking to make the problem of water supply a priority of the government.
• MESP challenges municipalities to greater engagement and action, particularly in the public utility supervisory boards”.

The second chapter of the Environmental Strategy, paragraph 1.2.2 b highlights as a strategy orientation: “Ensuring the right to drinkable water for all citizens”. However, even the Environmental Strategy of Kosovo does not have clear mechanisms on how the right to drinkable water for all can be achieved, although the latter paragraph is one step towards the implementation of the right to water in Kosovo.

At the present moment, Kosovo is developing a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), which targets the development of national strategy for water and action plan as a priority project.

According to Chapter 2, on Water Management, the NEAP targets: “Ensuring legislation infrastructure, technical, financial, and human capacity for creating a policy for integrated water management in Kosovo based on sustainable development”. The latter is aimed to be achieved through: “Rehabilitation and infrastructure building (water supply and sanitation network), plants for the treatment of wastewater with the purpose of environmental protection and fulfilling people’s needs”.

The time frame for NEAP implementation is five years. The chapter on Health and Environment indicates as an objective (O1) that “In five years to be identified, reduced and to prevent diseases and health threats by 20%”. A further priority project of NEAP is the “Function of new procedures for ensuring drinkable water”.

Participation of individuals and groups in water supply decision-making is related to people’s education. However, NEAP, in Chapter 15 prescribes overall environmental education and people’s awareness in order to increase individuals’ and groups’ participation in decision-making: “Application of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development in schools and university curriculum and to the civil society with the purpose of their participation in decision making”.

Also, the Environmental Strategy of Kosovo targets “Development and implementation of the programme have to intensively involve formal groups which have not played a role until now. As a first this has to do with trades unions, business associations and interest groups, employers, farmers, children, youth, women, cities’ associations, organisations and science and professional associations, etc”.

In general, every draft document is opened for comments as a public debate for a month before being approved by the Assembly. After this time a meeting is organised with 100-150 participants from different ministries, relevant organisations, experts, NGO
representatives, interested people and medias. The ministry or body that develops the documents makes a list of participation for public debate. Marginalised and vulnerable groups are represented in the decision-making processes by the representative of Social and Welfare Ministry and NGOs. The rural population is represented in decision-making processes by the head of the village, but their participation depends on their level of education and awareness of the importance of their participation in these processes.

Within the MESP is the Centre for Environmental Education, but it is important to mention that this is a new centre and they have a few publications referring to information and education concerning water and sanitation services.

In educational institutions, education and information in the water sector is barely addressed. Most of the environmental NGOs have been created since the war and they have little concern for education about water and sanitation. The media has a more sensational approach to water problems and neither the electronic nor the written media have regular programmes on water and sanitation issues.

There is no institution or organisation responsible for regular monitoring of the right to water. However, during implementation of some water projects, i.e. during the campaign with the advocacy purpose, “villagers must have access to safe drinkable water”, the current situation on the realisation of the right to water was indirectly monitored in targeted villages. The material elaborated during this campaign was delivered to the government, ministries, donors, NGOs, media and civil society. During the filming of the documentary “Forgotten villages”, the village leader and marginalised and vulnerable groups were involved. During this kind of monitoring the huge impacts that the provision, or lack of it, of safe water for personal and domestic uses have to poverty, gender equality, education and people’s health can be observed.

Example:

_Shqiponja, 16 years old, had to stop her elementary school since she has to collect water from school well’s which is pretty far from her house. During winter she must break ice from the river and wash clothes for 14 members of her family. So, difficulties that she is facing for providing water for personal and domestic uses have big negative impacts to her life perspective._

In general, the abovementioned investments in small independent water supply systems are a measure to secure security at water points and to facilitate easier access for women and children to water for personal and domestic uses.

b. Key Elements

- **Availability**

The NEAP identifies the fact that there is “not sufficient capacity of public water suppliers in the cities and their lack in rural areas” as both a first problem and a first priority to be addressed. As mentioned above, the NEAP foresees as a priority project the Development of National Strategy for Water and Action Plan, identifying the “Government; MESP; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Trade and Industry; Ministry
of Energetic and Mines; Ministry of Economy and Finance and Ministry of Health” as actors for compiling and implementing the strategy.

The basic minimum amount of water for personal and domestic uses is not stipulated in the state’s standards and regulations. However in NEAP, the amount of water used for personal and domestic uses in urban areas is calculated for that part of the population which has access to public water suppliers: “water supply to Kosovo’s population is made through seven regional companies where water consumption is estimated to be 50 – 100 litres per person per day”. It is important to mention that there are big variations even within the same city.

In Kosovo, the water supply is not continuous and hours of reduced or restricted supply are different even in different parts of the same city. For example, at the moment in Pristina, about 60% of the population has 24 hours water supply and the others are restricted to six hours per day. This situation is much better than five years ago. The restrictions are due to the poor state of the old water network, leakages in the cities and domestic network, overpopulation, water misuse, low level of invoices collection etc.

After the war, Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, became overpopulated after the war. In the two years following the war, the number of inhabitants almost doubled, but the same old water supply system was providing water for the city. Additionally, government institutions were in transition, legislation infrastructure was being constructed, there was a lack of education and people’s awareness in the water and sanitation sector, there were a lot of hours of restricted water supply. To improve this situation the public water utility Prishtina partially reconstructed the old water network. Also, bearing in mind that the efficient collection of bills affects provision of a basic minimum amount of water for personal and domestic uses, the Prishtina water supply utility has taken measures to improve bill collection through sending those with considerable amounts of unpaid bills to court, which will decide case by case whether to disconnect. Also, sometimes the public water suppliers take action by disconnecting those areas where payment is less efficient for a few days.

Even though over the last five years improvements to the management of public water suppliers have been made, the companies are still facing with big problems. The Public Utility Suppliers of Water and Wastewater invoice less than 25% of water production and about 35% of the customers connected to the water supply system do not receive bills. The collection rate for water services in Kosovo is below 40%.

While constructing independent water supply systems, the projects in the villages usually include training concerning water use and water cost to improve water management. One other positive step for small independent water supply systems is the use of water metres for measuring how much water has been used.

- **Physical Accessibility**

About 300 small independent water supply systems have been built in rural areas and usually these connect all families to the water system, including social cases, which are not able to participate by financial way, or by physical work during the construction process. It is also important mention that in Kosovo those villages inhabited by minorities, mainly Serbian and Roma are given priority for implementation of the projects for reparation and rehabilitation infrastructure.
In general in Kosovo, when a family is connected to the water supply system, there are no differences in the proportional use of the water according to gender or age. However, water problems in rural areas have more impact on women. This is because Kosovo’s women, no matter what their geographical location is, are mostly responsible for housework, childcare and the care of sick members of the family. They are also the primary water users (dishwashing, cleaning and washing clothes). But women and children in rural areas, unlike women and children in urban areas, are water providers, that means, they are responsible for collecting water as well. This makes their lives more difficult, especially when the water sources are far from their home.

Example:

The old woman Mane Hoda from Kushnin village describes her pain from providing water for her and her family. Mane’s health is destroyed since she had to awake up at 4 o’clock in the morning and was obliged to provide water for her family from the distance of two kilometres, three times every day. Her life has been a disaster since she fell down and broke her leg.

In the cities there are some water springs, built about a hundred years ago, where the water quality is controlled by the Institute of Public Health (IPH). However, the number of springs is not sufficient for all of the nomadic, homeless persons and other vulnerable and marginalised individuals or groups.

• Quality

Research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2000 shows that, “Kosovo has the highest morbidity rates in Europe in terms of disease transmitted by water”.

Kosovo has no national standards on drinking water, but uses EU standards and WHO guidelines. „Harmonisation of the quality of drinkable water legislation with EU legislation” is targetted in NEAP.

Water from urban utilities are analysed everyday for chemical and bacteriological contamination. Also, their water quality is reviewed by IPH, which has been given this responsibility by UNMIK. These suppliers inform the public through the electronic national, local and written media when there is any significant risk in water quality. These water quality standards apply mostly to urban water providers and very rarely in rural areas. In fact IPH has a strategy for analysing the quality of water for ten villages in one municipality. Due to a lack of human and equipment resources within IPH, this includes a very small number of villages. For example, Gjakova municipality has more than 80 villages and a branch of IPH there is reviewing water quality only for ten villages. The major contaminant of surface and ground water is wastewater, which is entering rivers and streams without treatment and contaminating ground water and private wells.

Regional branches of IPH periodically monitor the quality of drinking water in some targetted villages. The data from IPH shows that approximately 80% of the population in Kosovo located in rural areas that use water from domestic wells consume

3 Villagers must have Drinking Water” Oxfam GB in Kosovo, March 2005, p 6
contaminated water. Analyses made in the villages of three municipalities (Mitrovice, Skenderaj and Vushtrri) show that about 50% of their water is contaminated by faeces and about 90% is not drinkable.

Families that access water from wells are responsible for the maintenance of their water. But bearing in mind the high levels of poverty and low levels of awareness on water and sanitation, they are faced with big problems regarding water quality. If somebody wants to analyse the quality of their well water, they have to pay about €40 for bacteriological and chemical analyses. That is a huge amount considering the economic situation in Kosovo, especially in villages. Sampling, controlling, maintaining and analysing water quality of collective independent water supply systems is cheaper and is easier to be maintained compared with private wells. So building an independent water supply system is one step toward better quality standards. The environmental strategy includes long-term protection of water resources as a national wealth and for their sustainable use. Water law obliges the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) to approve by-laws for exploitation and sustainable management of water resources. As mentioned above, the NEAP plans, “Rehabilitation and infrastructure construction (water supply and sanitation network) and plants for the treatment of waste water with the purpose of environmental protection and fulfilling people’s needs”. In fact there is only a national level strategy, which has not been adapted at the local level. One reason for this is that the process of decentralisation has started, but has not yet reached the water sector.

- **Affordability**

There is no general policy or process for ensuring that the needs of the poor be taken into account during the design of new water and sanitation infrastructure. However, often the needs of the poor are considered during the implementation of water infrastructure projects at the local level. Usually, the committee leading water supply construction decides that all villagers to be connected to the system, including social cases that are not able, participate during water supply construction.

At the moment, social cases that are not able to pay for water and electricity bills can take evidence for their economical status from the municipal authorities to release them from paying for water services. However, this is a temporary measure, which is not foreseen by water law.

Currently, the Water and Wastewater Regulatory Office (WWRO) is working to compile new tariffs, since water tariffs are not adequate at the moment. Actually, water tariffs for public (urban) water supply systems do not depend on the number of members in the family, or on the number of squares meters inhabited by the household. All households have to pay the same tariffs. Thus, in urban areas, whatever the type of water supply system, whether pumping or gravity, consumers pay the same price for water per cubic meter. The tariffs for consumers in rural areas are different, where the tariffs are higher for consumers getting water from pumping systems (about €0.60 per cubic metre), and less for consumers with gravity systems (around €0.25 per cubic metre).

The government provides subsidies for low-income households through the Social and Welfare Ministry. This is around €60 per family per month dependent on the level of poverty, the number of family members, capacity for work, diseases etc.
• **Sanitation**

Only 28% of Kosovo’s population is connected to the sewage system and this figure in rural areas drop to 3%. There isn’t any waste water treatment plant in Kosovo. In fact, in 2005, a pilot project was developed for building the first waste water treatment plant in Skenderaj municipality, with capacity for 25,000 – 30,000 inhabitants.

The Water Department (under MESP), compiled a national long-term model (to be realised by 2020) for the treatment of wastewater and for extending the sanitation network. The strategy for wastewater treatment foresees the financing of wastewater treatment and extension of water network to be done 55% from foreign loans; 35% from grants and 10% from self-investment (improving collection rate and raising tariffs).

Kosovo’s villages are facing bigger problems because of the lack of sanitation systems. Villagers usually use septic tanks which are not constructed to sanitary standards and they often contaminate drinking water from wells. As already mentioned above, analyses made by IPH in 38 villages in three municipalities made in different seasons show 50% of wells water contaminated by faeces and 90% of the water was undrinkable.

The investment for sanitation facilities in villages is very small. In many villages, a water network is constructed, but no sanitation network. In some cases, such as the villages of Drenas municipality, wastewater flows through open canals to the rivers and during the rainfall this overflows to inhabited areas.

For nomadic and traveller communities there have been no measures taken for sanitation, even in the cities. For example there used to be public sanitation facilities in the centre of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, (more than half a millions inhabitants), but this was destroyed during the war (1999) and it no longer functions.

• **Vulnerable and marginalised individuals groups**

The Social and Welfare Ministry is preparing a strategy for fighting poverty in general, which will include vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Every year, the national government develops a strategy for delivering budgets to all ministries. The Social and Welfare Ministry then distributes this budget to municipalities. This assistance is then distributed to the vulnerable and marginalised groups by the municipalities. Local authorities also assist social cases by providing a document for their circumstances and with these documents they are free from payment for a basic amount of electricity and water bills. However, poverty is high and social assistance is not sufficient for normal life.
V. Conclusions

Since Kosovo aims to be part of EU, it needs to develop its water sector by implementing the principles included in the Water Directive of EU. However, the problems which Kosovo faces such as its undefined status, economic problems, poverty etc. will make implementation of EU criteria in the water sector very difficult.

It has been shown in this case study that access to safe drinking water for personal and domestic uses and access to proper sanitation for Kosovo’s population is not sufficient, but it has improved in the last five years. Maintenance of small independent water supply systems has become easier, costs less and has improved access to safe drinkable water:

From this case study the following recommendations for improving the existing situation are:

• Fulfilment of water legislation at the national level and adapting it to the local level.
• Preparation of by-laws that will best regulate the management of independent water systems in villages
• Clarification of roles and responsibilities between different actors and stakeholders and development of a model at the local level for this purpose.
• Human capacity building and development of a process for public education and awareness about water and sanitation.
• Creation of preconditions for increasing participation in decision-making and special provision for representatives for vulnerable and marginalised groups
• Participation of women at all levels of the water and sanitation sector, including her participation in decision making.
• Increase in human capacity and the technical equipment to monitor water quality and to apply EU standards for water quality
• Strengthening of mechanisms from the Social Welfare Office to benefit marginalised and vulnerable groups.
• Definition of the status of public utilities as soon as possible, since this affects the whole water sector
• Development of contracts between stakeholders, customers and water utilities to increase accountability and transparency between them.
• Increase in investments in the water sector and construction of water supply systems to be linked to the construction of sanitation systems
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