ONEWATER
EUROMEDITERRANEAN
WATER FORUM
ROME 29.09-02.10.2026

“Water and Health” - Advancing Sustainable Water Resources Management and Accelerating Progress towards SDG 6

UNESCO WWAP

Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum 2026 · 29 September – 2 October · La Nuvola, Rome

KEY INFORMATION

Date	30 September 2026
Time	15:30 – 16:30
Room	Itaca
Format	Roundtable
Language(s)	English

SUMMARY

Water and health are connected across the entire water cycle. The interconnections are particularly evident in the Mediterranean region. Increasing water stress, recurrent droughts, extreme heat, floods, saline intrusion, pollution, ageing infrastructure, and the impacts of climate change are placing increasing pressure on both water and health systems. These pressures have direct and indirect consequences on food security, livelihoods, and ecosystem integrity. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires integrated and sustainable water resources management approaches that place human health and well-being at the center of water policies and investments.

The forthcoming United Nations World Water Development Report (UN WWDR 2027) will provide an opportunity to reflect on the multiple linkages between water and health and to explore innovative and inclusive solutions that can accelerate progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 6 while contributing to broader health, environmental, and development objectives. The roundtable will explore how countries and institutions can act earlier, coordinate responsibilities and direct investment towards preventing harm. Panelists will share practical experience and identify approaches that could be adapted across the region.

AGENDA & SPEAKERS

Time	Speaker Name & Title	Organization	Role / Topic
15:30	Alvaro Lario, Chair	UN Water	Speaker / Welcoming and strategic framing

Time	Speaker Name & Title	Organization	Role / Topic
15:30	Miguel Doria, Coordinator	UNESCO WWAP	Speaker / Welcoming and strategic framing
15:45	Hani Sewilam, Minister	Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Arab Republic of Egypt	Panelist / High-Level Roundtable on emerging trends and on the links between water, health, and sustainable development
15:45	Gilberto Pichetto Fratin, Minister	Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security, Italy	Panelist / High-Level Roundtable on emerging trends and on the links between water, health, and sustainable development
15:45	Sara Pavkov, Minister	Ministry of Environmental Protection, Serbia	Panelist / High-Level Roundtable on emerging trends and on the links between water, health, and sustainable development
15:45	Akissa Bahri, former Minister	Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Fisheries, Tunisia	Panelist / High-Level Roundtable on emerging trends and on the links between water, health, and sustainable development
15:45	Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Water	UN	Panelist / High-Level Roundtable on emerging trends and on the links between water, health, and sustainable development
15:45	Annamaria Barrile, Director General	Utilitalia	Panelist / High-Level Roundtable on emerging trends and on the links between water, health, and sustainable development
16:25	Fiona Margaret Gore	World Health Organization	Speaker / Conclusions

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Water-related health risks extend beyond unsafe drinking water and inadequate sanitation. This is linked across the entire water cycle, from healthy aquatic ecosystems and water resources to drinking water, sanitation, wastewater management, and safe reuse. They also arise through contaminated food and irrigation water, exposure to untreated wastewater, disruption of essential services, and deterioration of aquatic ecosystems.

This interconnection is particularly critical in the Mediterranean, where water scarcity, droughts, extreme heat, floods, pollution, saline intrusion, ageing infrastructure, and climate change are placing growing pressure on both water and health systems.

The Roundtable will bring Mediterranean perspectives to this global discussion, identifying emerging risks, institutional and information gaps, and practical and scalable solutions to strengthen cooperation, resilience, and progress towards SDG 6 and related health and development objectives.

Outcomes of this roundtable will also help in shaping the key messages of the forthcoming UN World Water Development Report 2027 and World Water Day 2027 , both focusing on the water–health nexus.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1 — Identify priority water-related health risks and their implications for Mediterranean water policies and investments.

Objective 2 — Share practical approaches to safe reuse, resilient services, pollution prevention and equitable access; as well as identify the most significant emerging water-related health risks facing the Mediterranean region.

Objective 3 — Examine the institutional and information gaps that prevent water and health actors from planning and acting together.

Objective 4 — Provide a platform for dialogue among policymakers, water practitioners, public health experts, researchers, civil society organizations, and international institutions.

Objective 5 — Identify priorities and scalable responses relevant to the UN WWDR 2027 and progress towards SDG 6 and related health objectives.

TARGET AUDIENCE

-Government officials and policymakers working on water, health, environment, climate change, and sustainable development.

-Water and health-sector professionals, including water utilities, public health institutions, and technical experts.

-Researchers, academics, and practitioners working on water resources management, climate resilience, environmental health, and related fields.

-International organizations, development partners, civil society, and Mediterranean stakeholders engaged in water security, health, and sustainable development.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- **Enhanced understanding of the water–health nexus** and the interconnected impacts of water stress, climate change, pollution, and environmental pressures across the Mediterranean.
- **Greater recognition of integrated approaches** that place human health and well-being at the center of water resources management, policies, and investments.
- **Exchange practical examples of policies, services and investments that prevent exposure and protect health in the Mediterranean regions**.
- **Policy messages and regional experience** to inform the **UN World Water Development Report 2027** and support accelerated progress towards SDG 6.