

NEWSLETTER

July 2025



To our EU-WISH community,

We are very pleased to share with you the latest project updates, along with other news related to our core mission. This newsletter helps us all to stay connected and informed as we work together to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of wastewater surveillance (WWS).

Thanks to everyone's dedication and collaboration, EU-WISH is moving forward steadily. Whether you are actively contributing or simply following our progress, your interest and support are making a real difference to public health surveillance.

We wish you all a well-deserved summer break and look forward to reconnecting after the holidays, to continue growing this important mission together!

Latest news from the inside

Overview of progress from the project

With so many activities underway, it's important to stay abreast of what's happening across the project. This section provides a brief overview of our recent progress and next steps.

Over the past few months, the project has been particularly active with regard to periodic reporting under WP1, which is a strategically important activity for the Joint Action, reflecting and ensuring alignment.

In parallel, dissemination efforts have continued, notably with the workshop held online on 12 June 2025 on dashboards and other platforms for WWS information. Organised by Sciensano as part of Task 2.4, this event brought together 47 participants both remotely and on-site, marking Milestone 7 for WP2.

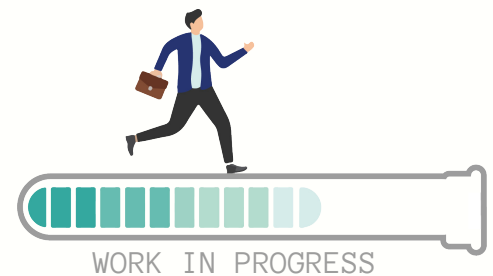
Thanks to an insightful presentation, teams involved in Task 6.2 shared key elements of their work during this workshop. They are now continuing their efforts separately to advance different aspects of data analysis. Task 6.1 is carrying on its scientific literature reviews and the development of a guidance document for sampling strategies.

Information gathering is progressing through activities such as Task 4.3, which maps existing training materials, identifies gaps, and assesses institutional capacity, and Task 6.3, which focuses on integrating WWS into national systems and its use for public health actions.

Meanwhile, the effectiveness of WWS as a public health preparedness tool is evaluated (Task 3.2). Attributes and targets have been identified, and an evidence gap map is being developed, along with a systematic review on WWS guidelines and a draft structure for integrating WWS into public health preparedness plans.

Regarding WP7, the next steps are to carry out the final analysis of the surveys sent out for the different sub-tasks. In parallel, best practices on technical protocols used are being collected so that they can eventually be disseminated to the Member States.

Finally, the tasks under WP5, each focusing on a specific topic, are preparing draft prioritization of wastewater monitoring targets. This prioritization, in each area of surveillance, will be discussed during the 1st International EU-WISH Workshop on 9 – 10 September 2025, in Dublin, Ireland. This international workshop will be the opportunity for other work packages to present their progress and key findings during workshop and dedicated breakout sessions.



Upcoming events

EU-WISH International Workshop and Consortium Meeting, Dublin, 9 – 11 September 2025



www.eu-wish.eu/get-involved/events

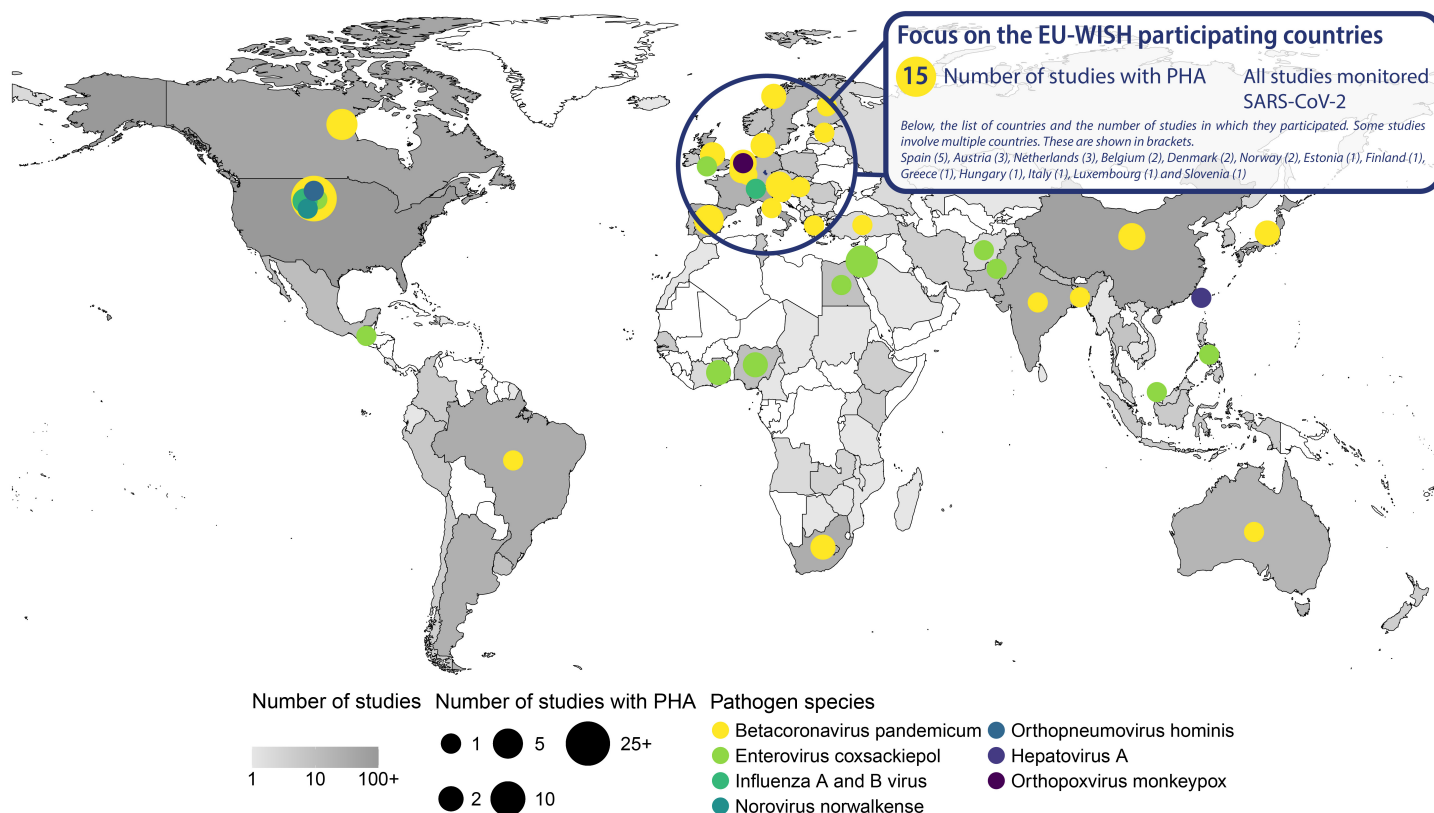
Bridging the gap: from wastewater surveillance to public health action

The EU-WISH Joint Action would like to highlight the recent article, "[Wastewater surveillance studies on pathogens and their use in public health decision-making: a scoping review](#)", for its comprehensive review of 974 wastewater surveillance (WWS) studies, and its revelation of a critical gap in the field.

This scoping review exposes a striking paradox: while WWS generates valuable data on multiple pathogens circulation (SARS-CoV-2, poliovirus, influenza viruses, respiratory syncytial virus, hepatitis A and mpox), only 9% of studies reported leading to concrete public health actions. Even more concerning, only one-third of these studies had incorporated strategies in their design to support such actions. The most common actions were informing health authorities and identifying cases.

Two key barriers emerge to explain this gap: insufficient reporting of operational use in scientific studies (as this is often not the main objective of the publication) and the absence of clear strategies to translate WWS data into public health policy. Notably, studies conducted by public health institutes and those targeting non-standard settings showed better action rates, suggesting that institutional context and strategic approach matter significantly.

EU-WISH directly addresses these identified gaps. Where individual studies operate in isolation, EU-WISH creates a coordinated European mapping of WWS activities that also specifically tracks public health actions taken. Rather than leaving each study to navigate alone from data to decision, the Joint Action develops shared resources and methodologies to strengthen the integration of wastewater data into existing surveillance systems (Task 6.3) and supports more effective decision-making in future epidemic preparedness. This represents exactly what the research calls for: clear strategies, shared resources, and institutionalisation designed from the outset to maximize public health impact.



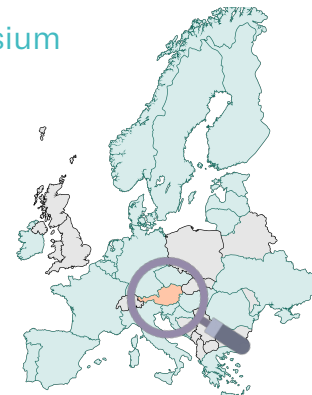
Adapted from Anne-Merel R. van der Drift et al., *Science of the Total Environment*, Figure 7, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2025.179982>

Meet EU-WISHers

Austria leads the way: highlights from the Water Quality and One Health symposium

In this edition, the spotlight turns to Austria. After a very successful first event in 2023, our Austrian partner **AGES**, together with the Inter-University Cooperation Centre Water and Health (ICC W&H), hosted the second Water Quality and Health Symposium on 5 June 2025.

This year's event was dedicated entirely to Water Quality & One Health. The increasing frequency of droughts and floods caused by the climate crisis threatens water quality, and thus the health of humans, animals and plants. Pathogens and pollutants add to these challenges. To address them, innovative concepts and new methods (from physico-chemical and microbiological techniques to molecular biology and numerical models) are needed to monitor and safeguard our water. The symposium explored these concepts and examined the risks that climate change, chemical pollutants and faecal contamination pose to drinking water.



Thanks to numerous presentations by national and international experts, it was possible to cover a broad spectrum for the **122 participants** in the audience.

The day began with a keynote speech on bacteriophages as a versatile tool in the environment and medicine.

Austrian speakers then shared insights focusing on the national context and challenges:

- The **effects of climate change** on water resources and the impact of extreme weather events on groundwater and drinking water quality.
- **Pathogens and pollutants in drinking water and wastewater**, including waterborne zoonotic pathogens, faecal contamination, pathogenic *E. coli*, and a case study on *Vibrio cholerae*.
- Health risks of **chemical pollutants**, focusing on the transport behaviour of PFAS in porous soils.
- Faecal pollution in the Danube and **antibiotic resistance**.



Group photo of the Water Quality and One Health symposium, Vienna, 5 June 2025.



Hans-Peter Stüger, Task Leader for WP 6.2

The final part of the symposium looked at wastewater as a resource, a source of information and a potential threat.

In addition to presentations on wastewater reuse, this session featured national and international projects on wastewater monitoring, with a special emphasis on the **EU-WISH project**, where AGES is significantly involved in some work packages. The presentation was made by Hans-Peter Stüger, an AGES expert and Task Leader for Work Package 6.2.

Broader context

WaterMicro2025

Held in the Netherlands in mid-June, the **22nd Health-Related Water Microbiology Conference** brought together over 500 participants from around the world. The conference featured an impressive scientific programme comprising 380 posters, 135 oral presentations, 11 side events and six workshops.

Many EU-WISH members played an active role, showcasing their expertise and promoting the project through activities such as the WES-Detectives serious game and a workshop on AMR surveillance in wastewater. Thank you to everyone who shared their work and helped raise the profile of the project throughout the conference and afterwards on social media.

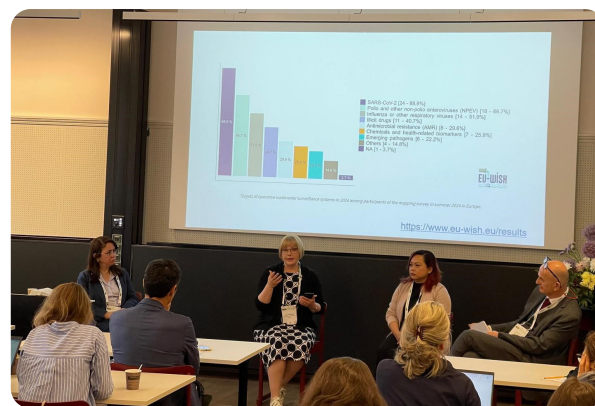
For the full list of scientific contributions from EU-WISH members, please refer to the [news item](#) on our website.

Sharing EU-WISH insights at the IWA ecoSTP conference

The results of the EU-WISH mapping survey on the wastewater activities in Europe were presented in the 7th IWA International conference on Ecotechnologies for Wastewater Treatment on June 25th 2025 at Stockholm, Sweden by WP5 leader Tarja Pitkänen.

The conference workshop "New Perspectives of the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive" was chaired by Bernd Manfred Gawlik and Bilge Alpaslan Kocamemi.

In this event, it was possible to convey information about use of wastewater as a public health information source to the audience working in other fields of water sector than public health epidemiology.



Tarja Pitkänen, WP5 Leader presenting EU-WISH results.

Fun & Educational

The power of social media and why LinkedIn matters for EU-WISH

For over a year now, EU-WISH has been active on social media: Bluesky (113 followers) and, above all, LinkedIn, where our project gets its greatest visibility with 297 followers and counting.

Social media brings huge advantages to a scientific project like EU-WISH. Not only does it dramatically increase our reach and visibility, it also facilitates connection, sharing and collaboration across borders and disciplines. With free and unlimited reach, researchers can showcase their work openly and join global conversations that help science move forward.

However, not everything is perfect. Social media have their own flaws, like the spread of misinformation or the risk of important updates getting lost in a sea of content.

That's why communicating clearly and reliably is so important. By posting trustworthy news, we build confidence in our work and in wastewater surveillance as a whole.

If you use LinkedIn or any other platform, here are a few quick tips to grow your own reach:

- Post 1–3 times per week, spaced out.
- Use 2–6 well-chosen hashtags.
- Keep content relatable and interesting, using clear language that makes science accessible to everyone.
- Interact: comment and share thoughtfully.
- Whenever possible, prefer figures, images, or videos with subtitles over plain text.

Together, let's spread the word, so that more people understand and trust what we do.

If you'd like to help shape EU-WISH's online presence, please get in touch!



Calls to action

Be prepared for the Dublin International Workshop the 9 - 10 September 2025, where we'll be discussing the prioritisation of WWS targets and their integration into public health!

The pre-meeting material will be shared with the registered participants in August 2025.

Stay connected

Keep up to date with the latest actions, events, workshops, and activities of EU-WISH!

- Visit the website: <https://www.eu-wish.eu>
- Subscribe to our Newsletter by [contacting us](#)
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