



The President

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International Lifesaving Federation of Europe

demands at the first UN proclaimed
World Drowning Prevention Day
on 25th of July 2021



**Anyone
can drown.
No one
should.**

Stop the Death in the Water - Water Safety and Drowning Prevention need more Attention

Drowning is a silent and hidden killer

Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death worldwide – also in Europe. 23.000 people die every year in European waters by drowning. This means in average more than 3 people every hour.

These numbers do not include the refugees drowning in the Mediterranean Sea or the victims of disasters, water transport accidents or suicides. In addition, thousands – not rescued in time – are suffering lifelong disabilities as a result of non-fatal drowning accidents.

Although, the situation varies greatly in different European countries, the number of drownings has dramatically increased - in some countries up to 25%. This was the case already some years ago, but during the summer 2020 and COVID-19 pandemic the situation has gotten worse.

Drowning is an underrecognized public health issue, that affects all countries and regions.

Drownings are preventable

However, drowning is preventable. There are simple, economic and effective ways to prevent drownings. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a historic resolution on global drowning prevention on 28 April 2021. In this resolution UN calls on governments and different stakeholders to take urgent, coordinated, and multi-sectoral action.

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Volksbank in Schaumburg
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Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for children

Most of these deaths could be averted. Proven interventions to reduce drowning among children include removing or covering water hazards, installing four-sided pool fencing, using personal flotation devices and instituting immediate resuscitation.

In many European countries the number of children, who are not able to swim, constantly increases and the situation seems to be getting worse. There are less swimming lessons at schools. The number of public swimming pools is decreasing and in many country pools were long closed due to the pandemic restrictions. In addition, there is less interest or lack of knowledge among parents especially with lower socioeconomic or migrant background.

In order to improve the situation, the lifesaving federations have started programmes to increase the swimming ability of children. The programmes consist of various measures, such as raising public awareness, supporting communities to keep public pools open, helping with lifeguard services, supporting schools by taking over swimming lessons and organising special programmes for teachers, providing information on swimming programmes to less educated parents and to families with a migration background and cooperating with financial supporters.

Bathing areas without lifeguards are a water safety risk

Statistics proves: supervision by lifeguards reduces the risk for drowning extremely.

According to the European Directive 2006/7/EC concerning the management of bathing water quality the Member States of the EU have to monitor the quality of the bathing water and to provide information to the public and to report to the European Commission.

This means that the state offices for public health and consumer protection monitor regularly the coli bacteria in the bathing water at about 23.000 designated bathing areas in Europe knowing that a huge part of them are not supervised by lifeguards. Therefore it is still more likely to die when bathing there than get a diarrhea.

People need to be informed that drowning is a serious water safety risk, that can be reduced by favouring lifeguarded waterways.

The governments must act: Drowning as a public health issue needs more attention and proven drowning prevention measures need more resources.

The parents must protest: Every child has the right to learn to swim – under safe conditions.

Everybody can help:

- Always watch your child around water!
- Wear a life jacket when boating!
- No alcohol when active on and near water!
- Always swim at lifeguarded waterways!
- Train safe rescue skills!

We can all act to end drownings - Join the World **#DrowningPrevention** Day, 25 July 2021

References:

World Drowning Prevention Day, declared through the April 2021 UN General Assembly resolution ([A/RES/75/273](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/273)) “Global drowning prevention”, is held annually on 25 July. This global advocacy event serves as an opportunity to highlight the tragic and profound impact of drowning on families and communities and offer life-saving solutions to prevent it.

WHO World Drowning Prevention Day Information Page:

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-drowning-prevention-day/2021>

UN resolution on Global Drowning Prevention: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/273>

More information on International Lifesaving Federation of Europe (ILSE):

<https://europe.ilsf.org/>

[ILSE Welcomes UN Resolution on Drowning Prevention – ILSE \(ilsf.org\)](https://europe.ilsf.org/)

ILSE on Social Media:



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