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**MEETING OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND
USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND
INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Working Group on Water Management
Helsinki, 28-29 April 2003

REPORT ON THE FOURTH MEETING

Introduction

1. The fourth meeting of the Working Group on Water Management was held at the invitation of the Government of Finland in Helsinki, at the Finnish Environment Institute, on 29 April 2003. On 28 April, a workshop on extreme floods and dam safety was held at the same venue.
2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and Switzerland.
3. Mr. Milan Matushka (Slovakia), Chairperson of the Working Group, opened the meeting.

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I. OPENING STATEMENTS

4. On 28 April, at the opening of the workshop, Mr. Kai Kaatra, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, addressed the participants (see document MP.WAT/WG.1/2003/3).

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in document MP.WAT/WG.1/2003/1.

III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING

6. The Working Group adopted the report of its third meeting as set out in document MP.WAT/WG.1/2001/9 with a correction to its annex proposed by Switzerland concerning programme element 2.7, management and sustainable development of international lakes. The paragraph on the lead country should read:

“Switzerland not being in the position to lead this programme item, the Working Group will at its fourth meeting, on the basis of the experience gained with the preparations for the pilot projects on monitoring and assessment of transboundary and international lakes (programme element 3.2.3 led by Finland), either designate a lead country or consider merging programme elements 2.7 and 3.2.3.”^{1/}

IV. RECENT AND NEW INITIATIVES UNDER THE CURRENT WORK PLAN

A. Strengthening the capability of joint bodies to comply with the obligations under the Convention (programme element 2.2)

7. The Working Group took note of the information that the secretariat provided on the work it had undertaken on the Water Convention's web site, in order to make available updated information on joint bodies and on bilateral and multilateral agreements on transboundary waters in the UNECE region.

8. The Working Group took also note of the progress of a project, jointly carried out by UNECE, UNEP/Regional Office for Europe, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and the NGO Ecoterra, on transboundary cooperation in the newly independent States and, in particular, of the outcome of a workshop organized within this project (Moscow, 31 March - 1 April 2003) (see Working Paper 4^{2/}). The results of the workshop and the final project paper will represent a basis for future work under the Water Convention in this region (see para. 30). The final project paper will be presented at next ministerial meeting of the “Environment for Europe” process in Kiev (21-23 May 2003) and at the third meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (Madrid, Spain 26-28 November 2003).

^{1/} Agreement was already reached at the third meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Finland, 3-5 October 2002) that relevant issues of programme element 2.7 would be covered by the work under programme element 3.2.3.

^{2/} Working papers presented at the meeting are not official UN documents. These can be downloaded from the Convention's web site at <http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/wgwm/workingdocuments.htm>

B. Interstate distribution and rational use of water resources of transboundary rivers in water-deficient regions (programme element 2.6)

9. The Working Group discussed the draft “Recommendations on issues of interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary watercourses and their rational use with due regard for water quality aspects”, prepared by the Russian Federation with the assistance of the secretariat (Working Paper 1). It noted that the paper needed some further editorial revision and checking of the English translation. It suggested that the recommendations should stick out and proposed to have a summary of them.

10. The Working Group took also note of the proposal made by the international workshop on “Interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary river basins” (Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation, 4-6 December 2002) to establish a group of experts to deal with issues related to the protection and use of transboundary waters in the newly independent States, in order to develop recommendations on regulatory/legal, organizational, economic and technical aspects of the joint use and protection of transboundary watercourses, with the aim to secure effective cooperation of States on this issues (Working Paper 2). Due to the lack of further information and the absence of the Russian Federation, the proposed leader of this expert group, no decision could be taken on this subject. The Working Group invited the secretariat to approach the Russian Federation on the question, also taking into account the recent developments under the EU Water Initiative (see para. 12) and the leading role that the Russian Federation will play for integrated water resources management on a transboundary context within the Initiative (see Working Paper 9).

C. Sustainable flood prevention

11. Germany informed the Working Group about its intention to organize a conference on sustainable flood prevention, in 2004. The Conference should build on the European Initiative on Flood Prevention, which will result in a best practice document based, *inter alia*, on an evaluation of the UNECE Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention and on the experience gained in EU member States and accession countries during the recent years. The Conference would then be a second step to involve other non-EU and non-accession countries and incorporate their specific experience, needs and approaches. Germany will be in the position to better define the project once the EU best practice document will be presented at the EU Water Directors Meeting (17-18 June 2003). The organization of the conference, including the establishment of a task force, will start after that. The date of the conference is still to be agreed (see also para. 21 and document MP.WAT/WG.1/2003/3). The Netherlands, Hungary and Finland expressed their willingness to cooperate on this project.

V. PARTNERS IN COOPERATION

A. Joint work of UNECE with the Global Water Partnership (GWP) on integrated water resources management (IWRM)

12. The secretariat informed the Working Group on the development of the Environment Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) developed in the framework of the Environment for Europe process and on the Strategic Partnership on Water for

Sustainable Development, the EECCA component of the EU Water Initiative, launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2002) (Working Papers 4 and 9).

13. The Working Group recognized that the Strategic Partnership will represent an important tool for the implementation of the Water Convention and will reinforce its role but that the mechanisms and actual implementation were still undefined and that more clarity was needed on the relationship between the work under the Convention and the Strategic Partnership.

14. The secretariat will prepare an informative paper after the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", when the functioning of the Strategic Partnership will be defined, explaining mechanisms and implementing structure of the Strategic Partnership and the relationship with, and the role of the Water Convention and UNECE, in particular by listing the building blocks of the Partnership in which a role of the Water Convention could be foreseen.

B. Follow up to the third World Water Forum

15. The Working Group discussed the outcome of the third World Water Forum (Japan, 17-23 March 2003) and the Ministerial Declaration. In particular, it was noted that the progress in the philosophy of the ecosystem approach to include dry ecosystems, such as forests, could be developed in the future work plan (see para. 27).

16. The delegation of Switzerland proposed that in the Declaration of the third Meeting of the Parties it should be clearly stated that access to water is a human right, as declared by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comments on 26 November 2002. The UN Committee's General Comment serves as an interpretation of the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Switzerland underlined that most Parties to the Convention have ratified the Covenant ^{3/} and should implement the Comments. Furthermore, such a statement would be extremely useful for the UNECE region where one person out of seven does not have access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

C. Kiev Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe"

17. The Working Group took note of the information by the secretariat about the preparations for the second joint special session of the Parties to the Conventions on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, which would be held in Kiev (Ukraine), on 21 May 2003, to adopt the protocol on civil liability and compensation for damage caused by the transboundary effects of industrial accidents on transboundary waters. ^{4/}

^{3/} All Parties to the Convention but Kazakhstan have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

^{4/} On 21 May 2003, the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters was adopted by the second joint special session of the Parties to the Conventions on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, and then signed by 22 countries.

VI. STRATEGY ON WATER MANAGEMENT UNTIL 2006 AND BEYOND

18. The Working Group discussed a draft proposal for a work plan on water management until 2006 and beyond, prepared on the basis of the results of the consultation organized by the Chairperson (Working Paper 8). A revised draft version of the work plan, on the basis of this discussion, is reproduced in the annex.

19. The Working Group agreed on the general structure of the proposal for the work plan 2003-2006 to be presented to the third Meeting of the Parties (26-28 November 2003), indicating for each programme element the objectives, the work accomplished, the work to be undertaken, the lead Party, the participating Parties, the main partners as well as, where relevant, some background information. The Working Group also decided to have a transparent process for the preparation of the work plan proposal for the third Meeting of the Parties (26-28 November 2003) by using the Water Convention web site as a platform for publishing updated countries' proposals.

20. The main conclusions concerning the different programme elements presented in Working Paper 8 are summarized below.

Flood prevention and protection

21. Germany will be the lead Party of this programme element (see also para. 11) and will provide further details and clarifications on it, also according to the outcome of the European Union's Initiative on Flood Prevention. The delegation of Germany will present the project for the International Conference on Flood Prevention and Flood Protection to the EU Water Directors meeting, to ensure the best coordination and cooperation between the EU Initiative on Flood Prevention and the UNECE Conference.

22. As regards the proposal by Germany to study the opportunity of developing a legally-binding instrument on sustainable flood prevention (see also programme element 1 in the annex), Finland and Switzerland opted at this stage for the development of soft-law texts. In the ensuing discussion, Germany draw the attention of the Working Group to the fact that the EU Initiative would not deal with legal instruments; therefore the consultation process for the definition of this programme element for the Meeting of the Parties should further investigate on this issue

Strengthening the capability of joint bodies

23. The Working Group agreed that activities in this area would mainly focus on the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia region, and therefore would be listed under the specific programme element (see para. 30). This programme area could be kept in the work programme for specific requests for assistance by countries

Public participation in water management

24. The Netherlands, lead Party for this programme element in the 2000-2003 work plan, confirmed its willingness to lead the programme element in the future work plan but questioned the

real usefulness of developing a manual on public participation, as originally planned, as many guidelines had already been developed in the region. The work under this programme element should take stocks of the experience gained and focus on the dissemination part. The Netherlands will submit a new proposal for this programme element. The countries, which had expressed their willingness to contribute to this activity under the work plan 2000-2003 will be invited to decide on their future involvement according to the final proposal.

Water management and protection of the marine environment

25. The Working Group took note of the information by the secretariat on the FreshCo partnership, launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development by UNEP/GPA and UCC-Water (Denmark), on Linking Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), to which the UNECE has been invited to contribute. The Working Group agreed that the secretariat should serve as a link with the partnership and keep Parties informed. It was reminded that the need to extend the integrated management to coastal zone was already expressed at the second international conference on sustainable management of transboundary waters (Miedzyszdroje, Poland, 21-24 April 2002). It was suggested that a possible activity under this programme element could be a workshop on the regional experience in this field.

Ecosystem approach in water management

26. The Working Group agreed that current activities under this programme element are mainly related to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, while the future work plan should allow for activities strictly related to the ecosystem approach as well as for activities linked to the Water Framework Directive.

27. Under the ecosystem approach programme element, Switzerland proposed to lead two activities:

- A workshop, to be held in 2004, on the role of forests as water suppliers;
- A workshop on financing of environmental services.

Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive

28. The Working Group deemed that an important role of the Water Convention is to support the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and spread its results. The Working Group did not decide on any specific activity but proposed to keep the suggestions as listed in Working Paper 8 for further discussion. Some other possible activities were mentioned: exchange of experience on the cooperation with the countries on the fringe of the enlarged EU and dissemination of the results of the EU pilot projects on transboundary water basins under the Common Implementation Strategy.

Integrated management of transboundary waters in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)

29. The Working Group agreed that activities under the Water Convention focusing on the EECCA region should be developed under the umbrella of the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development of the EU Water Initiative but that the respective roles of the Water Convention and of the Strategy should be made clear.

30. The Working Group supported the proposal for capacity building activities to strengthen joint bodies and transboundary water cooperation, through the organization of a series of workshop on the main issues of transboundary water cooperation in the region. In particular Finland and Switzerland considered the idea interesting and would investigate on possible financial support. It was noted that a key to the success of the project is to find the right participants. The Regional Environmental Centers operating in the region could be important partners.

Water and industrial accidents

31. The Working Group agreed on the work under this programme element as defined in Working Paper 8. It noted that countries sharing the Elbe River basin started preparing, together with the International Commission for the Protection of the Elbe and the UNECE secretariat, a simulation exercise to be held in the course of 2004 (see programme element 8.1 in the annex).

32. Furthermore the Working Group agreed that the work plan should also include a cross-cutting programme element related to the dissemination of information on the Water Convention, its activities and other main activities in the area. The objectives would be to provide a platform for informing the Parties and at the same time to improve the Convention's visibility through a better use of communication technologies (mainly Internet) and of the Convention's network. This programme element should be linked to IWAC activities.

Finalization of the work plan and preparation of the third Meeting of the Parties

33. The Chairperson summarised the discussion that took place during the meeting of the friends of the Chair (Geneva, 7-8 April 2003) on possible future arrangements.

34. For what concerns the future organizational structure of the work under the Convention, the Working Group discussed possible alternatives. A first option would be to keep the current structure with Working Groups. The option suggested at the meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, to merge the Working Groups on Monitoring and Assessment and on Water Management, did not seem the best appropriate, given the high number of activities under the two Working Groups. Another alternative was presented: to create specific task forces for each programme element, lead by the lead Party of the programme element and composed of the other Parties and partners involved. The task forces would report to the Bureau of the Convention which would have a broader composition, overview the overall progress of work and closely steer the strategy of the Water Convention, in a flexible way, in order to be able to react to new developments and needs.

35. Financial arrangements were also discussed, in particular the possibility to create a trust fund for the Water Convention, as with the other UNECE environmental conventions. This would have many advantages. First of all it would allow countries to lead activities also if they cannot stand the economic burden of financing participation of eligible countries. It could also ease the work of the secretariat by eliminating the unpleasant practice of having to ask for support to participate in meetings under the Convention.

36. An enlarged Bureau meeting will be held on 29-30 September 2003 in order to finalize the work plan and prepare proposals for the Meeting of the Parties on the future organizational structure of the work under the Convention and on the financial arrangements.

VII. WORKSHOP ON EXTREME FLOODS AND DAM SAFETY

37. The workshop took place on 28 April 2003. The report is presented in document MP.WAT/WG.1/2003/3.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

38. The delegation of Switzerland informed the Working Group on the recent OECD publication "Improving Water Management: Recent OECD Experience" and on the European Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health "The future for our children" (Budapest, 23-25 June 2004) which will focus on the measures that Member States can take to address the impact that a contaminated environment has on children's health. In this regard, it suggested investigating if any work should be developed under the Protocol on Water and Health with children as a specific target.^{5/}

IX. CLOSING

39. On behalf of the participants, the delegations of Slovakia and Switzerland thanked the Government of Finland for the excellent arrangements that had been made and for the cordial hospitality extended to them during the meeting. The participants expressed their gratitude for the financial assistance provided by Finland to support the participation of eligible experts.

^{5/} Further discussions on this issue will be held during the second meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 2-4 July 2003).

ANNEX**DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR A WORK PLAN ON WATER MANAGEMENT
UNTIL 2006 AND BEYOND**

This draft proposal will be reviewed and completed in the preparation process to third meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention. Updated versions of the draft work plan will be made available on the Convention's web site at the address <http://www.unece.org/env/water/cooperation/area.htm>.

Programme element 1. Flood prevention and protection

NOTE: Germany will present a revised description of this programme element.

Objectives: Review the experience in implementing the 2000 Guidelines on sustainable flood prevention with a view to update them in the light of the experience gained with the most recent flood events in Central Europe.

Work accomplished:

- Seminar on Sustainable Flood Prevention (Berlin, 7-8 October 1999).
- 2000 Guidelines on sustainable flood prevention.

Work to be undertaken: Germany proposed to host an International Conference on Flood Prevention and Flood Protection in the second half of 2004. It also suggested studying the opportunity to launch a negotiation process in order to develop a legal instrument on the subject, to be submitted in 2006 to the fourth Meeting of the Parties for adoption.

Lead Party: Germany

Participating Parties: An open-ended task force to prepare the 2004 Conference will be established. Hungary, the Netherlands and Finland have already expressed their interest.

Main partners: Representatives of International Commissions, such as of the International Commissions for the Protection of the Rhine, Elbe, Oder, Danube, Meuse and Scheldt, and representatives of other Joint Bodies with experience in transboundary cooperation in flood prevention and flood protection, especially from countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Cooperation with the European Commission should be set up in order to ensure harmonization with the planned EU integrated strategy on flood prevention and protection and with the focus of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). Moreover, as in the case of the previous task force, cooperation with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO) will be established.

Programme element 2. Strengthening the capability of joint bodies

NOTE: This programme element is not related to any specific activity yet. The development of activities under this programme element will be upon request from the countries. If no concrete proposal is presented before the Meeting of the Parties, the Working Group may also decide to delete this programme element.

Objectives: Provision of guidance to joint bodies in the region to strengthen their ability in integrated river basin management and water protection. Difficulties encountered in implementing the Convention arising from differences in administrative practice, in management and protection responsibilities or in water use rights in riparian countries will be also examined, weak points of management discovered, and guidance for jointly developing water resources management and setting priorities provided. The results of the activity will be widely disseminated and facilitate future cooperation.

Work accomplished:

- Workshop “From dispute to consensus - the role of binational and multinational commissions on transboundary waters”, Bonn, Germany, 13-14 September 1999.
- On the Water Convention’s web site (<http://www.unece.org/env/water>) basic information on bilateral and multilateral agreements and on joint bodies has been included and permanently updated.
- Workshop “Transboundary Waters in the Newly Independent States” (Moscow, 31 March - 1 April 2003), within the project jointly developed by UNECE, UNEP/ROE, the Ministry for Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the NGO “ECOTERRA”.

Lead Party: Slovakia

Participating Parties: To be decided

Main partners: UNEP, representatives of secretariats of joint bodies.

Programme element 3. Public participation in water management (former programme element 2.1)

NOTE: The Netherlands will present a proposal for work under this programme element, including the definition of the work to be undertaken.

Objectives: The Meeting of the Parties will assist countries to comply with provisions of relevant conventions, protocols and other binding and non-binding instruments to make policy- and decision-making on integrated management of catchment areas a matter of concern to both public authorities and the public. Guidance will be given to countries and joint bodies so that public participation can lead to an improvement in the quality and implementation of, and commitment to, decisions,

increased accountability, increased transparency and increased public awareness of water management issues. The work under this programme element will take into account relevant provisions of the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, the work developed by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, the EU guidance on public participation from the Common Implementation Strategy of Water Framework Directive, as well as the results of the testing of the EU guidance in the Pilot River basins and any other relevant experience in this field.

Work accomplished:

- Draft guidelines on public participation in water management (MP.WAT/2000/4, 6 and Add.1) prepared by a group of invited experts.
- Workshop on Public Participation in Water Management (The Hague, Netherlands, 18 September 2001).

Work to be undertaken: To be decided.

Lead Party: Netherlands

Participating Parties: To be decided.

(In 2001, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Slovakia informed the secretariat of their readiness to contribute to the programme activity related to public participation under the 2000-2003 work plan)

Main partners: To be decided.

(In 2001, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), the NGOs Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation and the NGO MAMA-86 informed the secretariat of their readiness to contribute to the programme area related to public participation under the 2000-2003 work plan).

Programme element 4. Water management and protection of the marine environment

NOTE: This programme element is still to be finalized. At its fourth meeting, the Working Group on Water Management expressed its interest in the topic but did not define any concrete proposal.

Background: UNECE and the Water Convention have been invited to participate in the FreshCo partnership, launched at the WSSD by UNEP/GPA and UCC-Water (Denmark), on Linking Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The overall objective of the partnership is to promote more efficient methods for management of fresh, coastal and marine water resources, including protection of the productivity and biodiversity of aquatic ecosystems (for more information, please consult <http://www.ucc-water.org/FreshCo>). This is in line with the wishes to extend the integrated management of

freshwaters to coastal zones and the marine environment, expressed at the second international conference on sustainable management of transboundary waters (Miedzyzdroje, Poland, 21-24 April 2002).

Objectives: To be decided.

Work to be undertaken: To be decided. At the fourth meeting of the Working Group, it was suggested to organize a workshop to share the experience gained in the UNECE region on the integration of freshwater and coastal area management, as well as the results of projects in this field.

Lead Party: To be decided.

Participating Parties: To be decided.

(The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany and the Polish Ministry of Environment are among the partners of FreshCo.)

Main partners: To be decided.

(Among others, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO), the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the EUCC - The Coastal Union -, the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) participate in the partnership.)

Programme element 5. Ecosystem approach in water management (former programme element 2.3)

Work accomplished:

- Seminar on Ecosystems Approach to Water Management (Oslo, May 1991).
- 1993 Guidelines on the ecosystems approach in water management (ECE/ENVWA/31).

Programme element 5.1 Role of forest as water suppliers

NOTE: Switzerland will present a complete description of this programme element.

Background: For the first time, in the Ministerial Declaration of the third World Water Forum the important role of forests as important ecosystems that naturally capture, filter, store and release water was officially recognized.

Objectives: Review and disseminate experience and best practice already available in this field.

Lead Party: Switzerland

Participating Parties: To be decided.

(Finland and Germany have some experience in the area.)

Main partners: To be decided.

(There could be countries outside the UNECE region, such as Japan, interested in this programme element.)

Work to be undertaken: Organize a workshop, to be held in 2004.

Programme element 5.2 Environmental services and financing of sustainable ecosystems

NOTE: Switzerland will present a complete description of this programme element.

Objectives: Review and disseminate experience on hydro-solidarity between upstream and downstream populations, and practice on innovative ways of financing sustainable ecosystem through examples of successful public - private partnerships and public - public partnerships.

Lead Party: Switzerland

Participating Parties: To be decided.

Main partners: To be decided. The involvement of the World Economic Forum could be envisaged.

Work to be undertaken: Organize a workshop.

Programme element 6. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive

NOTE: This programme element was considered extremely important but neither activities nor lead Party could be established. Below are listed some proposals made at the fourth meeting of the Working Group and in other earlier events.

Objectives: Serve as a platform for disseminating the work on the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive developed by EU Working Groups and Expert Advisory Forums, in order to facilitate cooperation in basins shared with non-EU countries.

Lead Party: To be decided.

Participating Parties: To be decided.

Main partners: To be decided.

Work accomplished:

- Workshop on approaches and tools for river basin management: experience drawn from the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (Bratislava, 15-16 October 2001).

- International Workshop on the EU WFD “East meets West on Integrated River Basin Management” (Bratislava, 27 – 28 June 2002).

Work to be undertaken: Below are listed some possible activities:

- Develop guidance on step-wise approaches for introducing concepts and principles of the EU Water Framework Directive into the water management of non-EU countries.
- Test the guidance document on the economic analysis developed in the framework of the EU Common Strategy in countries in transition and adapt it, if required, to the specific conditions of these countries.
- Transfer early experience from EU Member States to countries in transition on ways of better integrating water management issues into other sector policies.
- Exchange experience on cooperation on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive with countries at the borders of the enlarged EU.
- Spread the results of the EU pilot projects on transboundary water basins under the Common Implementation Strategy.

Programme element 7. Integrated management of transboundary water in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)

Objectives: Work in this area should build on recent initiatives for the region, e.g. the Environment Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development (EU Water Initiative), the Partnership on Water, Environment and Security in Central Asia. The work should address the region’s problems related to sustainable use of water, demand management and sharing of water among countries, ecosystem approach in water management, including aspects of biodiversity and integration of land and water management; pollution prevention and rehabilitation of damaged ecosystems. Indicators for sustainable water management could be developed. This programme area should also assist in the implementation of the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive at least in the river basins the EECCA countries share with EU member countries

Lead Party: To be decided.

(At a high-level meeting held in Moscow in March 2003, the Russian Federation expressed its readiness to act as lead country on issues related to integrated water resources management in a transboundary context, and Ukraine expressed its readiness to assist in activities related to integrated water resources management in a national context).

Participating Parties: All countries from EECCA are partners to the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development. Under the overall leadership of Denmark, the UNECE secretariat and the Russian Federation are now responsible for Transboundary River Basins.

Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and the Russian Federation expressed their willingness to participate in

the development of recommendations on regulatory/legal, organizational, economic and technical aspects of the joint use and protection of transboundary watercourses in EECCA, on the condition that donor countries would assist in providing travel support for eligible participants.

Main partners: To be decided.

(Cooperation with the European Commission, the OECD, UNEP, UNDP, WHO/EURO, OSCE, the Global Water Partnership and the Regional Environmental Centers operating in the region could be foreseen. Cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) could also be established.)

Work accomplished:

- International workshop “Interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary river basins” (Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation, 4-6 December 2002) in which the “Recommendations on issues of interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary watercourses and their rational use with due regard for water quality aspects” were presented.
- Workshop on “Transboundary Waters in the Newly Independent States” (Moscow, 31 March - 1 April 2003).

Work to be undertaken:

Capacity-building activities and the exchange of experience between managers of transboundary waters, mainly staff of joint bodies, in order to create a framework for the cross-fertilization between the different bodies acting in the region and to allow transfer of capacity from successful institutions from outside the region. This will be achieved through a series of workshops, each focusing on specific aspects of cooperation (e.g. legal, regulatory and institutional framework; joint monitoring and assessment, including exchange of information, information systems, early warning and alarm systems; pollution prevention, control and reduction; allocation of water resources and sustainable use of water; river basin management plans and relation with the EU Water Framework Directive - integrated water resources management including the ecosystem approach, environmental objectives and public participation; relation and policy integration with regional seas; flood prevention and flood protection). The workshops’ results will be issued in the UNECE Water Series in order to widely disseminate general and specific guidance for transboundary water management in the region.^{1/}

^{1/} The workshops should be attended by managers of transboundary waters in the region, by representative of well-established joint commissions (for the session on integration with coastal and marine resources management, by representative of regional seas commissions), by experts from international organizations, the private sector, NGOs. During the workshop, the situation in the different joint bodies and the level and development of cooperation related to the theme should be analyzed, participants be brought to review their approach and propose solutions. As an outcome, general recommendations for the region, as well as specific recommendations for specific river basins should be drawn and deadlines for their implementation set. The workshops should be hosted in rotation by the different countries and associated with a visit to a joint commission, which would present its structure, organization, management strategies, main problems and achievements.

Programme element 8. Water and industrial accidents (former programme element 2.8)

Objectives: The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents will implement their joint programme on water and industrial accidents, further develop the recommendations contained therein, and provide advice to joint bodies and other relevant authorities, organizations and institutions to improve the safety and management of industrial installations so as to prevent transboundary accidental water pollution, taking into account the achievements of the joint bodies for the protection of the Elbe, Danube and Rhine.

Work accomplished:

- Workshop on prevention and limitation of industrial accidents with effects on transboundary waters, Berlin, Germany, 7-9 May 1998 (MP.WAT/WG.1/1998/7).
- UNECE Seminar on the prevention of chemical accidents and limitation of their impact on transboundary waters, Hamburg, Germany, 4-6 October 1999 (MP.WAT/SEM.1/1999/3), organized jointly under the auspices of the Meetings of the Parties/Signatories to both Conventions.
- Workshop and exercise on industrial safety and water protection in transboundary river basins (Tiszaujvaros, Hungary, 3-5 October 2001) and Polish-Russian transboundary response exercise and workshop "Kotki 2002" (Ketrzyn, Poland 13-15 June 2002).

Main partners: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), UNEP, WHO/EURO, European Commission.

Programme element 8.1 Water and industrial accidents: joint measures (former programme element 2.8.1)

Work to be undertaken:

Implement the short-term activities set out in the joint programme (MP.WAT/SEM.1/1999/3, annex I) to promote cooperation and prompt communication in the event of an industrial accident, further develop the joint programme and adapt it to changing circumstances.

Joint activities include the identification of hazardous activities for the purposes of both Conventions, safety guidelines/best practices for the prevention of accidental water pollution, notification and alarm systems, cross-border contingency plans and the organization of joint response exercises, such as the response exercise tentatively scheduled for 2004 within the framework of the International Commission for the Protection of the Elbe. These joint activities also include the drawing up of safety guidelines for pipelines and tailing dams, and possible adaptation of existing guidelines to the specific needs and circumstances of river basins.

Joint activities also include the evaluation of the country responses (see programme element 8.2) and the compilation of an assessment report for submission to the fourth Meeting of the Parties in 2006.

Upon request, assistance will be provided for the interim implementation of the Protocol on civil liability and compensation for damage caused by the transboundary effects of industrial accidents on transboundary waters.

Lead Parties: Hungary (for water issues) and Switzerland (for industrial safety issues).

Participating Parties: Armenia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Switzerland, Ukraine.

Programme element 8.2 Water and industrial accidents: measures to be undertaken by each Party (former programme element 2.8.2)

Work to be undertaken: The long-term activities set out in the joint programme (MP.WAT/SEM.1/1999/3, annex I) will be carried out by each of the Parties (by countries with market economies within a period of five years, and by countries with economies in transition within a period of ten years). These activities include the adaptation of national legal systems, the setting-up of administrative procedures and the implementation of technical measures at the level of industrial installations and within production practices. Each Party will report to the respective Meetings of the Parties about achievements (reporting by countries with market economies in 2005 and by countries with economies in transition in 2010).

The format of the reporting scheme and criteria for compliance will be established by the joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents (see programme element 8.1) and sent to countries with market economy in 2005 for the 2006 assessment of achievements.

Lead Party: none, to be implemented by each Party.

Participating Parties: all Parties from countries with market economies for the review to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties in 2006.

Programme element 9. Dissemination of information related to the Water Convention

Background: This programme element is cross-cutting and not only related to the Working Group on Water Management but to all activities under the Convention work plan.

Objectives: Disseminate information on activities carried out under the Water Convention or related to the Water Convention, increase updating over the work developed and the activities planned, enhance visibility of the Water Convention, provide Parties with information which could assist in the implementation of the Convention.

Work to be undertaken: Design and update the Convention's web site to contain all needed information, define proper way of updating on the development of the work under the Convention (news letters, updating e-mails), publicize the Convention's activities in specific information media.

Lead Party: none, to be implemented by the secretariat in cooperation with the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC).

Participating Parties: All Parties should timely provide the secretariat with information relevant to the Convention work to be spread.