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

INFORMATION NOTICE

**WORKSHOP ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATER MANAGEMENT AT THE NORTH-
EASTERN BORDER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:
THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK
DIRECTIVE AND THE UNECE WATER CONVENTION
(Sterdyn, Poland, 18-19 October 2005)**

1. The Workshop on Transboundary Water Management at the North-Eastern Border of the European Union will take place in Sterdyn (Poland), on 18 and 19 October 2005, at the invitation of the Government of Poland. The workshop is organized in cooperation with the European Commission.

I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

2. The UNECE Water Convention and the European Union Water Framework Directive (EU WFD) are complementary tools for the integrated management of transboundary waters in the European region: the Water Convention can facilitate coordination between EU member States and non-member States with regard to their shared waters as required by the EU WFD; at the same time, Parties to the Convention outside the EU can benefit from the experience under the WFD to comply with their obligations under the Water Convention.

3. Parties to the Water Convention, therefore, decided at their third meeting to disseminate the work on the implementation of the EU WFD carried out by EU working

groups and expert advisory forums in order to facilitate cooperation in basins shared by EU member States and non-EU countries (see ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.2).

4. This activity seeks to:

(a) Test and possibly adapt the guidance documents developed in the framework of the EU Common Implementation Strategy in countries in transition;

(b) Transfer early experience on ways of better integrating water management issues into other sectoral policies from EU member States to countries in transition; and

(c) Disseminate the results of the EU pilot projects on transboundary water basins under the Common Implementation Strategy.

5. Within the same activity, another workshop focusing on South-Eastern Europe will be held, at the invitation of the Government of Italy, in Belgrade (Serbia and Montenegro), on 17 and 18 November 2005.

II. PROGRAMME

6. The workshop is part of a two-step process and will be followed, in 2006, by a second workshop aimed at defining a specific project on transboundary waters to be developed in the region.

7. The first workshop will therefore provide a general overview of the management of transboundary waters in Eastern Europe and of practices in EU and non-EU countries. In particular, experience gained in the implementation of the WFD, by international river commissions and within international projects on transboundary waters will be shared. Information on relevant funding instruments for transboundary water cooperation projects will also be presented. Finally, the workshop will propose activities to improve cooperation on transboundary waters in the region and make recommendations for the workshop follow-up. The annex contains a provisional workshop programme.

8. The working languages of the workshop will be English, Russian and Polish.

III. PARTICIPATION

9. The workshop will be attended by high-level water managers from central and regional authorities responsible for transboundary water management in EU member States at the north-eastern fringe of the EU (Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia) and in bordering non-EU countries (Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine). Participants will be requested to provide contributions and analyse their national practices of transboundary water management in the light of the EU WFD and the Water Convention.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

10. The Government of Poland has invited the relevant countries to nominate workshop participants. These will receive further information on practical aspects such as transport, workshop venue and accommodation.

Annex

PROVISIONAL WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 18 October 2005

9.00 – 9.30 Opening of the workshop

Opening speeches by the Government of Poland, the European Commission and UNECE.

9.30 – 10.15 Transboundary water management: the complementary roles of the EU WFD and UNECE Water Convention

Joint presentation by the UNECE Water Convention's secretariat and the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment.

10.15 – 10.55 Institutional arrangements: the experience of international river commissions

Presentations on the International Commission for the Protection of the Oder and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.

10.55 – 11.10 Break

11.10 – 13.00 Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in transboundary river basins

Progress achieved in the implementation of the WFD in Poland and other EU member States.

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 16.00 Water management in countries along the north-eastern EU border

- Presentation by Belarus on national water management and transboundary water cooperation with EU countries with regard to the Bug, Nemunas and Daugava/Dvina rivers.
- Presentation by the Russian Federation on national water management and transboundary water cooperation with EU countries: Finnish-Russian cooperation, Russian-Estonian cooperation, cooperation on Nemunas and Daugava/Dvina rivers, Gdanski Basin and Curonian Lagoon.
- Presentation by Ukraine on national water management and transboundary water cooperation with Poland, Hungary and Slovakia.

16.00 – 17.00 Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian water cooperation experience

Presentations by national and regional water managers from the three countries.

Wednesday, 19 October 2005

9.00 – 13.00 Field trip to the Bug river basin

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 Financing cooperation and available funding instruments
Presentations on EU funding opportunities, on the experience with TACIS projects in the region and GEF funding opportunities.

15.30 – 16.00 Break

16.00 – 18.00 Conclusions and recommendations
Discussion and recommendations on the next steps to be taken to improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region, including proposals for the 2006 workshop.