



Transboundary Water Management in South-Eastern
Europe: the complementary roles of the EU Water
Framework Directive and the UNECE Water Convention

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Background

At their third meeting, the Parties to the Water Convention decided 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

- n Workshop on transboundary water management at the North-Eastern border of EU (Poland, 18-19 October 2005)
- n Workshop on transboundary water management in South-Eastern Europe (Serbia, 2-3 March 2006)

Workshops' objective

- n Test and possibly adapt the guidance documents developed in the framework of the EU Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) in countries in transition
- n Transfer early experience on ways of better integrating water management issues into other sectoral policies from EU member States to countries in transition
- n Disseminate the results of the EU pilot projects on transboundary water basins under the CIS

Belgrade workshops' structure

The workshop reviewed progress in the management of transboundary waters in SEE and neighbouring countries. Priority issues have been discussed through specific transboundary basins

- n Danube – Sava River Basin
- n Adriatic Sea Basin
- n Aegean Sea Basin

Concrete recommendations to address these issues at regional, national and basin levels have been agreed upon and activities to improve cooperation on transboundary waters were proposed.

Belgrade workshops' recommendations

- n The political situation in the region has large implications for transboundary water cooperation. The political will to develop transboundary water cooperation needs to be strengthened
- n The development of cooperation in the Sava River Basin is a promising example of progress, however integrated approach and joint management for the majority of transboundary watercourses need to be enhanced
- n The national legal and institutional framework for (transboundary) water management is weak in many countries. Lack of human and financial resources in the water sector has been identified as a common problem in the region

Belgrade workshops' recommendations

- n Transboundary flood prevention, protection and mitigation is improving while water quality protection remains a key issue to be properly addressed
- n Stable and reliable funding is necessary for maintaining cooperation in transboundary water resources. Since cooperation cannot depend on external sources, governments should secure the necessary funds from the national budget
- n EU WFD and UNECE Water Convention are key tools however their implementation should be promoted in a step-wise approach at national and transboundary level

Belgrade workshops' recommendations

- n The establishment of harmonised monitoring and information system as well as involvement of stakeholders are primary objectives in the development of transboundary water management
- n Pilot project to test both intervention strategies and stakeholders involvement methodologies need to be developed

Basin specific recommendations

The Drin river system including Lake Skadar, Lake Prespa and Lake Ohrid

The optimal format of bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms between Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia for the joint water management of this complicated river and lake system should be assessed. A new set of bilateral and multilateral agreements should be negotiated on the basis of this assessment to replace the presently not implemented 1955 Agreement between Yugoslavia and Albania. For example, negotiations of a new agreement for transboundary river management between Albania and Serbia should be initiated

Future actions

- n The UNECE Water Convention will continue to support transboundary water cooperation in SEE.
- n Draft work plan 2007-2009 includes:
 - i Assistance to Serbia to revise its agreement with Romania
 - i Preparation of recommendations to strengthen transboundary cooperation for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in October 2007
 - i Capacity-building activities
 - i Others to be defined
- n Need to join forces with the Petersberg and Athens Declarations Processes and the countries in the region
- n Italy will keep playing a strong role



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Thanks for your kind attention