

## The “Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes: Astana Water Action



### Template for reporting on the implementation of the Astana Water Action

#### I. Background

1. The Astana Water Action (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/5) is a collection of possible actions for improving the status of water and water-related ecosystems through their more sustainable management, prepared for the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, September 2011). This initiative aims to provide suggestions for Governments on possible concrete actions to take to better manage their water resources according to the local/national/regional challenges they face. Another objective is to provide arguments for improving the funding basis for water management from all sources.

2. Countries and other stakeholders were invited to commit to implementing some of the actions and to report on their progress at the future meetings of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy. Twenty-one countries and four organizations have committed to 75 actions in the framework of the Astana Water Action. These are: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United States of America, Uzbekistan, UNECE, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Eco-TIRAS International Environmental Association of River Keepers, and the International Network of Basin Organization (INBO).<sup>1</sup>

3. At the Astana Conference the Ministers endorsed the Astana Water Action and welcomed the initiatives launched by interested countries and organizations. They invited countries and other actors to implement the Astana Water Action and to report progress to the Committee on Environmental Policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Registered actions committed by countries and organizations under the framework of the Astana Water Action are available on the ECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/documents.html>, under the tab “Astana Water Action”). An overview of these actions is presented in the annex to the present document. In addition, a compilation of the actions that were presented at the Astana Ministerial Conference is available in the document ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/INF.40/Rev.1 ([http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2011/ece/ece.astana.conf.2011.inf.40.e\\_rev.1.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2011/ece/ece.astana.conf.2011.inf.40.e_rev.1.pdf)).

4. The Astana Water Action is intended to support countries' efforts in enhancing the sustainable management of water and in greening their economies. The implementation of this initiative can contribute to a large number of international processes and commitments related to water, such as:

(a) Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the future Sustainable Development Goals which are currently under discussion;

(b) Implementation of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocol on Water and Health, as well as of other related UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements;

(c) Implementation of water-related directives of the European Union;

(d) Implementation of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention);

(e) The World Water Forum, in particular the seventh World Water Forum, to be held in spring 2015 in the Republic of Korea;

(f) The "Environment for Europe" process.

5. At its eighteenth session in April 2012 CEP invited delegations to report on the progress in implementing the Astana Water Action, using a template to be prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureaux of CEP and of the Water Convention.

6. The secretariat will prepare a document on the basis of responses received from the Astana Water Action stakeholders.

## **II. Template for reporting**

7. The present template is aimed to harmonize the responses by the participating countries and organizations on progress made in implementing the committed actions under the framework of the Astana Water Action.

8. This template should be filled in and submitted to the ECE secretariat (efe@unece.org) as soon as possible and not later than Friday, 31 May 2013.

9. Information should be provided separately on each action included in the country commitments (please refer to the annex of the present document). Information should be provided through filling the template below for each of your committed actions:

### **1. Country/Organization:**

*Please indicate your name, organization and country.*

Ana Drapa, Ministry of Environment and Climate Changes, Romania.

### **2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)**

*Please indicate the title of the action on the implementation of which you are reporting. Those countries that committed to more than one action please kindly note that a template for reporting should be filled in for each action.*

Improvement of water resources quality by reducing nutrients discharges into water bodies (AWA Paragraphs 12 f, 13 f, 16 d).

3. Overview of progress made

(a) Has the action been implemented?

Yes /  In progress (31 December 2013) /  No

<p><b>Component 1 – Investments at Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) commune level</b>  <b>Investments in manure storage and management systems:</b> on going.  <b>Investments in sewerage systems and WWTPs for 12 objectives</b> (on going).  <b>Planting protection tree belts:</b> 85 ha in 10 NVZ communes; 40 ha in 2013 and up to 1.000 ha area until 2015.  <b>Testing and demonstrating the feasibility of producing biogas from manure and organic waste through anaerobic digestion and energy from biogas through cogeneration:</b> on going.  <b>Promoting the Code of Good Agricultural Practices (CGAP):</b> training sessions.</p> <p><b>Component 2 – Support for strengthening the institutional capacity</b>  <b>Nitrates Directive (ND) training:</b> 12 training sessions.  <b>Training of National Administration Apele Române (ANAR) technical staff</b> on chemical monitoring.  <b>Construction of 115 piezometers for 10 river basins administration within ANAR:</b> 95 construction permits issued; construction of 10 piezometers started in March 2013.  <b>Construction of the „Seminar room in the training center Voina –Argeş county”:</b> completed (2012).</p> <p><b>Component 3 – Public awareness campaign and replication strategy</b>  <b>Implementation of the national action plan:</b> Public information campaigns/materials.  <b>River basin awareness campaign</b> (April 2012-Dec. 2013): in progress.  Events: 11 workshops at basin level; a project promoting caravan and local seminars in 87 communes.  Promoting campaign: informative materials; interactive communication; press releases; radio spots; articles/interviews in national/local media (press/ local TV/radio shows ; 6 editions of the TV show “Between Water and Life”.</p>
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(b) What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?

<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <p>There were some constraints related to financial aspects regarding the development of some activities taking into consideration the global economical and financial context.</p> <p><u>Lessons learned</u></p> <p>Cooperation between institutions with attributions in the field of water, environment, health and agriculture, authorities at local and county level, and different stakeholders (e.g. farmers, water users, non-governmental organisations) and public led to achievement of sustainable results within the project.</p> <p>Activities within the project contribute to the successfully implementation of the EU Nitrates Directive, respectively to the protection the water resources quality with the aim to improve human living conditions as well as human health; these activities will be replicated at the national level.</p> <p>Based on the feedback and assessments from public awareness campaign it is obvious that the largest impact that could be made is at local level with the farmers. Therefore, it is intended that the Public Awareness Campaign to continue with emphasis on farmers’ trainings and local events.</p>
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(c) What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Changes together with the Ministry of Public Finance submitted to World Bank a request for a 2 years extension of the project, with the aim to fulfill the obligations related to the implementation of the EU Nitrates Directive.

The futures steps are referring to:

- finalizing the implementation all the project's activities within the three components by November 2015 (Communal waste facilities; afforestation program; workshops on "Training on ND and CGAP"; "Regional conference on implementation of ND"; public awareness activities "Dissemination of project implementation benefits").
- reorientation of the support for private farmers for building on-farm individual animal waste platforms;
- financing new activities related to assessment of needs for meeting the requirements of EU Nitrates Directive.

#### 4. Usefulness of the Astana Water Action

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate.

(a) *The Astana Water Action was useful to strengthen political support related to sustainable water management issues:*

strongly agree /  somewhat agree /  somewhat disagree /  strongly disagree

See point 3 (c)

(b) *The Astana Water Action has helped my country to comply with its international obligations:*

strongly agree /  somewhat agree /  somewhat disagree /  strongly disagree

*If agreeing, please elaborate how (e.g. European Union Directives, UNECE and other environmental agreements, Millennium Development Goals, Commitments made within the "Environment for Europe" process) (up to 250 words)*

Implementation of:

- the water related EU Directives (Water Framework Directive, Nitrates Directive, Groundwater Directive),
- the UNECE Convention on protection and use of transboundary waters and international lakes and its UNECE/WHO-Europe Protocol on Water and Health,
- the Convention on cooperation regarding the protection and sustainable use of the Danube River (Sofia 1994), and
- the Convention on protection of the Black sea against pollution (Bucharest, 1992) (meaning measures/actions at national level to reduce pollution from water resources/groundwaters, with impact on marine environment).

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes /  No

*Please elaborate (up to 250 words)*

The new actions to be proposed within the AWA framework in the future should be foreseen as actions to the implementation of the Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health.

## **Annex**

### **Overview of actions committed in the framework of the Astana Water Action**

#### **Actions by AUSTRIA**

Ambitious urban waste water treatment and drinking water supply nationwide in place

Implementation of IWRM; Improvement of ecosystems by restoration of river continuity and habitat connectivity

Enhancement of renewable energy production - Refurbishment program for small hydro power plants

#### **Actions by AZERBAIJAN**

Development of National Water Strategy of Azerbaijan

#### **Actions by BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Adoption of the Sava River Basin Management Plan, Programme of Measures

#### **Actions by BULGARIA**

Invest in environmentally friendly sanitation and wastewater treatment, appropriate operation and maintenance

#### **Actions by CROATIA**

Development of River Basin Management Plan

Implementation Plan for water utility directives

Introduction of “recovery of costs for water services” principle

#### **Actions by the CZECH REPUBLIC**

Promoting of concept of integrated water management

Water quality and quantity protection

Water quality and quantity monitoring and assessment

Guarantee of minimum environmental water flow in streams

Application of user-pays and polluter-pays principles

Access to save water supply and sanitation and its sustainable pricing

Climate change adaptation and IWRM

Transboundary cooperation and IWRM

#### **Actions by ESTONIA**

Improvement of hydro-morphological situation and ecological status of the surface waters

#### **Actions by FINLAND**

Promoting the efficiency of water use in production and consumption

Promoting the national policy dialogues on IWRM and WSS in EECCA countries. Support to the pilot project on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins of the EECCA countries

Promoting integrated water resources management especially climate change adaptation and vulnerability assessment

**Actions by GEORGIA**

Development Climate Resilient Flood and Flash Management Practices to Protect Vulnerable Communities of Georgia

Enhanced Preparedness of Georgia against Extreme Weather Events

National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management

**Actions by GERMANY**

Training and Competence Centre Karlovac

Climate Change adaptation strategy for the Danube River Basin

Regional Dialogue on transboundary water resources management in Southeastern Europe

**Actions by HUNGARY**

National Remediation Program of Contaminated Sites

National Program for the Protection of Drinking Water Sources

Introducing non-structural and more sustainable measures in the Hungarian flood risk management

Management and utilization plan supporting ecological baseline studies along the River Danube in the Gemenc and Béda-Karapanca Region (2006-2011)

Upgrading bilateral transboundary water agreements

Monitoring of wetland habitats and their communities

**Actions by ITALY**

Upgrade existing nationwide water monitoring networks in Italy

Define and monitor environmental flow in the Po river basin district and Arno river basin

Improve utilization of water resources in the agricultural sector in the Po river basin district

**Actions by the Republic of MOLDOVA**

Improvement of landscapes role in formation of water regime. Protection of the Lower Dniester and Lower Prut wetland ecosystems by creation of the “Lower Dniester” National Park and Lower Prut biosphere reserve and initiation of creation of the Lower Dniester transboundary protected area with Ukraine.

Elaboration of the integrated water resources management river basin plan

Ensuring Implementation and maintenance of strict target settings of reduction of the pollution from municipal industrial sources and discharge permits

Improvement of action plans of the emergency situations in industrial accidents.

Water policy dialogues

Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health

Continuation of the implementation of pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins and use of the experience exchange platform on Water Convention

Ratification of the new bilateral agreement on transboundary cooperation with Ukraine on the management of Dniester basin waters

**Actions by MONTENEGRO**

Drin Basin/Drin Dialogue: Montenegrin National Consultation Meeting for the management of the Drin Basin.

**Actions by PORTUGAL**

Project on Environmental Quality of International Water Courses Natural Reserves Common Integrated Water Resources Management Document between Portugal and Spain

Drought Warning and Management System

**Actions by ROMANIA**

Improvement of water resources quality by reducing nutrients discharges into water bodies

Implementation of the provisions of the bilateral transboundary waters agreement

**Actions by SERBIA**

Negotiations on trans-boundary water management agreements with neighboring countries

Preparation and implementation of the national Danube River Basin Management Plan

Preparation and implementation of the Sava River Basin Management Plan

**Actions by SWITZERLAND**

Promoting the concept of integrated water management

Water quality: mitigating micropollutants from point and diffuse sources

Remediation of hydromorphological alterations: Strategic planning by the cantons

Climate change adaptation: Adaptation strategy for Water Management

Integrated Flood Prevention

**Actions by UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Assistance to carry out an analysis of the economic ramifications of optimized water-energy resource utilization in the Syr Darya and Amu Darya River Basins

Assistance to carry out an analysis of the impact of Global Climate Change on regional hydrology in the Aral Sea Basin

**Actions by UKRAINE**

Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Ukraine

Development curricula for water professionals

**Actions by UZBEKISTAN**

Establishment of the new Ramsar Site Kuyumazar reservoir on the territory of Uzbekistan

Establishment of the new Ramsar Site Tudakul reservoir on the territory of Uzbekistan

**Actions by the EAP Task Force**

Strengthening the economic and financial dimensions of water management, including adaptation to climate change

Strengthening institutions for water supply and sanitation

Assessing the water policies and institutions in the Easter Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

**Actions by Eco-TIRAS**

Development of IWRM plans for Dniester River basin with action program

Promotion of regular bio-monitoring of natural waters, based on macroinvertebrates/algae, for rapid, cost-effective assessment of quality of water bodies

Application of the principle of environmental flow in rivers, ensuring the ecosystem needs/health. Development the use of payments for ecosystem services

Implementation of Dniester River transboundary cooperation

**Actions by INBO**

Preparation of a “Handbook for Integrated Water Resources Management in Transboundary Basins of Rivers, Lakes and Aquifers”

**Actions by the ECE**

Promoting cross-sectoral cooperation with the health, environment, agriculture, forestry, energy, industry and housing sectors

Development of transboundary water cooperation in the Dniester, Drin, Kura and Central Asian transboundary waters

Promoting transboundary cooperation in adaptation to climate change

Promoting the achievement of water related MDGs through the reform of the water sector and the development of concrete targets and target dates

Promoting the role of the ECE Water Convention beyond the ECE region at the global level

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