

Definitions and physical scope of the UNECE Water Convention

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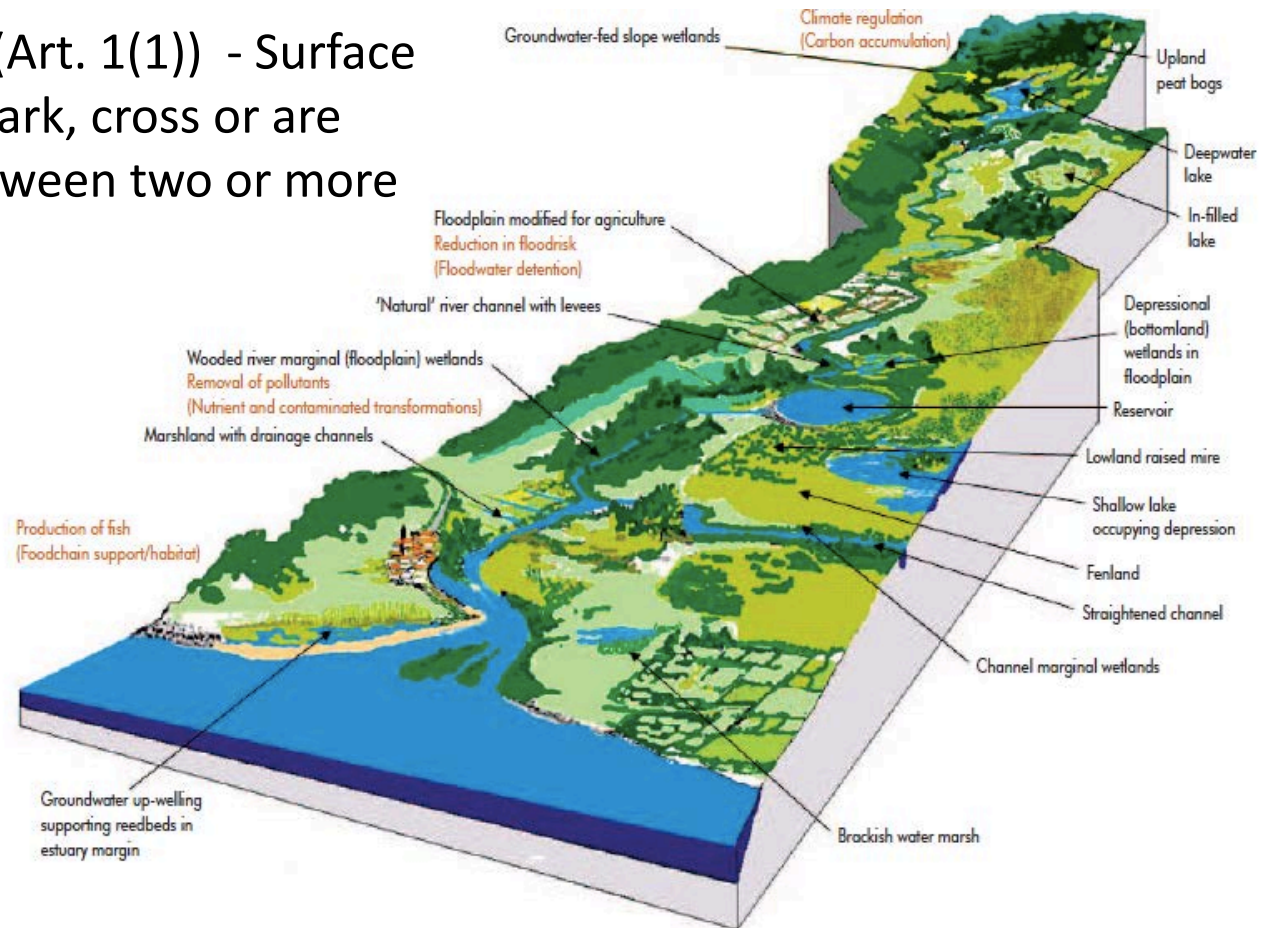


Scope

- Art. 1 (paras 1-4) and Art. 9 (paras 1 & 3)
- Guide p.13 (ENG) / p.19 (AR)

“Transboundary Waters” (Art. 1(1)) - Surface or ground waters which mark, cross or are located on boundaries between two or more States (Art. 1(1))

Develop harmonised policies, programmes and strategies covering the relevant *catchment* areas (Art. 2(6))



1. Geographic scope

Defining the geographical and hydrological sphere of application of the Convention

- “Transboundary waters” – any surface or ground waters which mark, cross or are located on boundaries between two or more States
- Surface waters (stream, river, channel, lake, reservoir, wetland) and groundwaters (confined and unconfined aquifers)
- Not limited to water body but covering catchment area (or recharge area for an aquifer)
- Integrated approach to water use and protection, including other elements of the environment (air, land, fauna, flora) → harmonized policies

2. Substantive scope

- Prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impact
- “Transboundary impact” = adverse effect on the environment resulting from change in conditions transboundary waters caused by human activity
Applies to any activity that may cause transboundary impact (unspecified nature and location)
- Holistic approach to concept of environment
- “Significant threshold” → case-by-case basis, to be assessed for elaboration of water quality objectives

3. Eligibility to participate

UNECE Water Convention initially a regional instrument → now a global treaty

Two categories of States: Parties (contracting Party) and Riparian Parties (bordering same transboundary waters)