



United Nations
Economic
Commission for
Europe



Ministry of Transport,
Public Works and Water
Management of the
Netherlands



European Water Partnership



World Water Council
World Water Forum



co-operative programme
on water
and climate

Cooperative Programme on
Water and Climate

Conference on Climate Change Adaptation and Water

Brussels, 12 and 13 March 2009

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Objectives

1. Climate change is already showing effects on water resources in European basins. Several countries have started to plan and implement measures to adapt to the impacts of climate change in the water sector, but many still face significant challenges in the development and implementation of adaptation strategies. Europe-wide cooperation and exchange of experiences would ensure countries benefit from the numerous existing activities and good practices and help them to achieve their objectives on Climate Change Adaptation and Water (CCA).
2. To this end, a Conference on Climate Change Adaptation and Water will be organized in Brussels from 12 to 13 March 2009, by the European Water Partnership (EWP), the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the World Water Council and the Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate.
3. The Conference will demonstrate and promote good practices in Europe in three crucial areas of adaptation to climate change: spatial planning, finance and water use efficiency and social aspects.
4. The Conference which is part of the European Regional Process for the fifth World Water Forum builds on numerous ongoing efforts for adaptation at the national and international level.
5. It is a response to the European Policy Summit on Water, organized by EWP on 5 November 2008, which called for a stronger and more focused cooperation on Climate Change Adaptation and Water and stated that Europe needs to take a leading role on this issue, similar to the leading role it took on mitigation.
6. The Conference will also contribute to the work under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and in particular to the preparations of the Convention's Guidance on Climate Change and Water.
7. Furthermore, a large amount of work has been undertaken in the preparation of the EU Green and White Paper. On a national level, the Dutch Delta Commission has developed a strategy to prepare the Netherlands to the expected impacts of climate change.

8. The Conference will be an important milestone in bringing together these various initiatives on CCAW. It will include a presentation of the EU Commission's White Paper on Climate Change Adaptation as well as the international launch of the Dutch Delta Commission Report. It will also provide opportunity to discuss and present the draft UNECE Guidance on Water and Climate Adaptation, developed under the Water Convention.
9. The Conference will be the first step in setting up this focused cooperation and will discuss how this cooperation can take form. Since it is part of the European Regional Process for the World Water Forum the Conference should lead to clear European messages to take to the fifth World Water Forum (European Regional Session) and to other political processes, specifically COP15 in Denmark 2009.
10. The event will incorporate representatives of government, business, NGOs, academia and the financial sector.

II. Background

11. Climate Change has become a reality over the last years, affecting water in particular. Within Europe, climate change will cause a higher frequency and intensity of extreme events and affect water supply to population. Different regions in Europe will be differently affected: in general the South and East will face water scarcity and droughts, while the Northern and Eastern regions will face more flood-risks due to higher sea levels and increased river-runoff. Europe will not be able to face these challenges by mitigation alone, adaptation will be necessary. A number of major processes have already been set up to address these challenges and will be among those being brought together in the Conference in March.
12. Under the **UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes**, a draft guidance on water and adaptation to climate change has been prepared. The Guidance includes a special focus on transboundary issues and the health-related aspects. Based on the concept of integrated water resources management, and its implementation, the Guidance provides advice on how to assess impacts of climate change on water quantity and quality, how to perform risk assessment, including health risk assessment, how to gauge vulnerability, and how to design and implement appropriate adaptation measures. The Guidance is expected to be formally adopted in November 2009 at the next Meeting of the Parties.
13. **European Regional Process** - In 2009 the fifth World Water Forum will take place in Istanbul. To prepare for this event, regional processes have been set up. The European Regional Process (ERP) is being coordinated by the European Water Partnership and has created a lot of dynamic in the debates on water issues in Europe. Within the ERP eight important European themes have been selected on which Europe should bring clear messages to the World Water Forum, by making use of the European Regional Document and the European Regional Session. One of these themes is Climate Change Adaptation; another is the "Water Vision for Europe" (see below). Within the theme Climate Change Adaptation major themes are the UNECE Water Convention Guidance on Climate Change and the Report of the Dutch Delta Commission.
14. **World Water Council** - The World Water Fora are organised every three years by the World Water Council and provide a platform for discussing possible solutions to global water problems. The fifth World Water Forum will have a specific focus on Climate Change Adaptation, building on the earlier work on this subject by the World Water Council.

15. **Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate** - The Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC) is a global initiative that aims to stimulate activities in the water sector that contribute to managing the effects of climate variability and change, in particular for the most vulnerable communities. It builds bridges between water managers and the climate community, from the local up to the global level. Through increasing awareness of the issues and of potential solutions it seeks to set in motion social and political processes that will lead to the adoption of coping strategies and best practices.
16. **Dutch Delta Commission** - On the 3rd of September the Dutch Deltacommission, led by Mr. Veerman, presented their report. The report presented an advice on how the Netherlands can make sure that it will remain an attractive place to live, work and invest for future generations. The Deltacommission will present its work as a European best practice example in the workshop.
17. The **European Water Partnership** has recently launched the **Aquawareness** Programme with the support of the European Commission, the European Parliament and European multinationals and NGO's. It aims to create awareness among political decision makers, key stakeholders and citizens about the need for water saving and water use efficiency and to trigger a change of behaviour and practices. Aquawareness is underpinned by the currently ongoing development of a **Water Vision for Europe** which is one of the main themes within the European Regional Process for the World Water Forum. The Vision consists of ten articles describing challenges and opportunities Europe faces regarding sustainable water management, such as climate change adaptation. On each of these issues a mapping exercise is performed to identify already ongoing activities and involved resources. Therefore, the outputs of the Conference and the mapping exercise will feed into a broader framework, the currently developed Water Vision for Europe.
18. The Conference will be an important milestone in bringing together these various initiatives on CCAW, enabling countries to benefit from the work undertaken around Europe.

III. Preparation of the Conference

19. The Conference will be underpinned by a **mapping exercise** of European activities on Climate Change Adaptation and Water that will provide a basis for the discussions of the Conference. The mapping will be based on a literature study into earlier research (specifically EEA and UNECE) and on information gathered through a survey to fill the white spots in the current knowledge.
20. Consultations and preparatory work will also be done to investigate the desired results of an increased cooperation on CCAW and what form this cooperation could take.

IV. Organisation of work

21. To discuss the different themes of the conference (spatial planning, finance and water use efficiency and social aspects), sessions will have different formats (e.g. presentations, panel discussions, working groups) and will be professionally moderated. To maximize the time for discussion and exchange of experience, interventions from the floor should last not more than 3 minutes. A detailed provisional programme for the Conference will be issued in February 2009.

V. Background documentation and conference outputs

22. The following documents will serve as background material for the Conference and be made available on the website of the EWP:
 - a. Draft outcomes of the mapping exercise
 - b. Information material related to the various initiatives underlying this Conference as listed under section II
23. Participants are urged to take material on their projects on CCAW to the Conference to share with the other participants.
24. A chairman's paper will be published containing the results of the Conference and the messages to be taken to the fifth World Water Forum.

VI. Practical information

25. The Conference will take place in Brussels from 12 March 10 am till 13 March 4 pm. Participants will be informed about the venue as soon as possible. Language will be English and Russian, with simultaneous interpretation.
26. During the Conference, set lunches are served in the venue. Please indicate in your Registration Form, if you have specific dietary requirements.
27. Details on hotels and bookings will be sent around over the next weeks

VII. Visas

28. Belgium forms part of the Schengen Area. If you are a passport holder of one the UNECE member States listed below, you need to apply for a "Schengen Visa" at the nearest diplomatic representation authorised issuing such visas. Please apply early, as obtaining a visa may take several weeks. The representatives of the following UNECE countries require a visa to enter Belgium: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The EWP will provide you with the invitation letter for visa purpose. Please indicate this requirement in your Registration Form and contact Mrs. Sandra Borst (s.borst@ewp.eu, tel: +31 70 3043711) for further questions.

VIII. Currency and money

32. In Belgium the currency is the Euro (€). Up-to-date exchange rates are available at <http://www.xe.com/ucc/> If needed you can buy Euros at exchange desks in the airport, railway station, and at automatic teller machines (with a credit card) and at exchange offices downtown.

IX. Insurance

33. Please make sure that you have adequate individual health, accident and travel risk insurance cover, they will not be covered by the organisers.

X. Registration

34. The Conference is open to experts from national authorities, water and health managers and practitioners, representatives of joint bodies, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders from all UNECE member countries as well as for experts from international organizations.
35. Each participant should complete a registration form (see www.ewp.eu) and return it to the EWP (s.borst@ewp.eu) as soon as possible, but not later than 26 February 2009.
36. Experts from eligible countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the Conference. Requests for financial support together with the registration forms should be addressed to the EWP (s.borst@ewp.eu) as soon as possible, but not later than 2 February 2009.

IX. Further questions and assistance

37. Should you need additional information or advice on practical matters, please contact Mrs. Sandra Borst (s.borst@ewp.eu / tel: +31 70 3043711) at the European Water Partnership.
38. Further information, the registration form and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course: www.ewp.eu.