

# European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

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Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes



# 1. Background

- \* 2002 EU launched its global Water Initiative (EUWI) to coordinate relevant policy advice to 3rd countries
- \* 2006 EUWI National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) started in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
- \* Currently ongoing in 10 countries
- \* Funding from: European Commission, Finland, Norway
- \* Jointly implemented by OECD and UNECE
- \* Chaired by Romania



## 2. Progress and achievements in 2016/17 (a)

### **Legislative work**

- \* Turkmenistan: new Water Code developed and adopted by Parliament (*October 2016*)
- \* Armenia: amendment of sanitation-related provisions in Water Code and other legal acts (*Spring 2017*)
- \* Kyrgyzstan: assessment of water legislation to prepare for revision of sanitation-related provisions (*Spring 2017*)
- \* Georgia: harmonization of draft Water Law, Law on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) and Law on EIA (*started July 2017*)



## 2. Progress and achievements in 2016/17 (b)

### Policy work

- \* Belarus and Ukraine: development of national water strategies (work started in 2017)
- \* Tajikistan: recommendations and guiding principles for use of economic instruments to promote efficient water use in the irrigation sector
- \* Kyrgyzstan: proposals for economic instruments to achieve better coherence between the agri-food and water policies. Developing of national indicators of water, food and energy security
- \* Kazakhstan: Economic assessment of Shardara Multi-Purpose Water Infrastructure. Proposals for improvements in river basin management system.



## 2. Progress and achievements in 2016/17 (c)

### **Transboundary work**

- \* Azerbaijan-Georgia: joint study with OSCE on historical and planned water use in Kura river (May 2017), preparations for next round of bilateral negotiations on Kura agreement (due September 2017)
- \* Belarus-Lithuania: activities towards a joint river basin management plan for the Neman (expert group meeting in July 2017)
- \* Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan: joint work with UNDP/GEF project on climate change adaptation in Chu-Talas basin
- \* Kazakhstan-Russia: preparations of bilateral protocol (on Kigac, tributary of Volga river) and strategy (on Ural)
- \* Moldova-Ukraine: preparations for bilateral negotiations to discuss implementation of Dniestr Treaty

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# 3. Plans in Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EUWI+ project) (a)

- \* 7 million EUR from DG NEAR/European Commission for OECD and UNECE work (Sep 2016 – Aug 2020)
- \* 6 EU Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
- \* Objective: to converge national policies and strategies with the EU Water Framework Directive, IWRM and relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- \* Additional 16 million EUR from DG NEAR/European Commission to consortium of EU Member States (Austria, France) to help under EUWI+ with river basin planning and water quality monitoring



# 3. Plans in Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EUWI+ project) (b)

## 1st EUWI+ Regional Steering Committee meeting (15-16 May 2017)

- \* broadly endorsed 4-year country workplans
- \* focus on revision of national strategic frameworks for WRM, legislation and new RBMPs
- \* countries more tend to determine a specific degree of approximation with EU water acquis, depending on reform costs
- \* identified more opportunities for regional work including transboundary cooperation
- \* sustainability of project results: need for capacity development



## 4. Plans in Central Asia

- \* 2006-2016 funding from DG ENV and DG DEVCO for EUWI National Policy Dialogues
- \* since 2016 gap in core funding and uncertainty about future, just few small projects by different donors
- \* continuous interest from countries of Central Asia
- \* request to maintain EUWI EECCA format and keep exchange between Eastern Europe/Caucasus and Central Asia
- \* joint concept note by UNECE and OECD about proposed activities in Central Asia
- \* good coordination with other donors/projects
- \* new idea about the EUWI regional policy dialogue





# 5. Main Lessons learned

- \* Strong ownership at national level is key
- \* Coordination with other frameworks/mechanisms important (SDGs, EU Association Agreements, etc)
- \* National Policy Dialogues help to move the water reform agenda forward and to streamline activities of different projects and IFIs...
- \* ...but the countries still need international organisations' facilitation and financial support to keep it going
- \* stability and long-term commitment is needed to succeed
- \* capacity and staff turnover at ministries/agencies is a barrier for implementation of necessary reforms

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## 6. Recommendations

- \* EUWI EECCA format under chairmanship of Romania remains relevant, exchange Eastern Europe/Caucasus – Central Asia
- \* National Policy Dialogues in Central Asia require more systematic funding and better coordination of donor activities
- \* Regional cooperation and transboundary water management remain important
- \* Shift from legislation, strategies and adoption of IWRM principles to implementation creates new challenges

