



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

Working Group on Water Management
Fourth meeting
Agenda item 6

Working Paper N. 8

**DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR A WORK PLAN ON WATER MANAGEMENT
UNTIL 2006 AND BEYOND**

Prepared by the secretariat

The Chairperson of the Working Group, Mr. Milan Matuska, organized a consultation among the friends of the Chair collecting, through a questionnaire, views and proposals on a mid-term (until 2006) and long-term (beyond 2006) strategy under the Water Convention related to the management of transboundary waters.

This draft proposal for the work plan is the outcome of a meeting of the friends of the Chair (Geneva, 7-8 April 2003) during which the results of the consultation, including Hungarian Focal Point comments submitted in written form, and other possible future areas of work, such as current activities still to be finalized and possible new activities stemming from the developed work, were discussed.

I. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION: COUNTRIES' PROPOSALS

1. Flood prevention and protection

Objectives: Review the experience in implementing the 2000 Guidelines on sustainable flood prevention with a view to update them in the light of the experience gained with the most recent flood events in Central Europe.

Work accomplished: Seminar on Sustainable Flood Prevention, Berlin, 7-8 October 1999 and 2000 Guidelines on sustainable flood prevention.

Work to be undertaken: Germany proposed to host an International Conference on Flood Prevention and Flood Protection in the second half of 2004. It also suggested studying the opportunity to launch a negotiation process in order to develop a legal instrument on the subject, to be submitted to the 2006 Meeting of the Parties for adoption.

Lead Party: Germany

Participating Parties: An open-ended task force to prepare the 2004 Conference will be established. Hungary and the Netherlands have already expressed their interest.

Main partners: The task force should also include participation of representatives of International Commissions, such as of the International Commissions for the Protection of the Rhine, Elbe, Oder, Danube, Meuse, Scheldt, etc., and representatives of other Joint Bodies with experience in transboundary cooperation in flood prevention and flood protection. Cooperation with the European Commission should be set up in order to ensure harmonization with the planned EU integrated strategy on flood prevention and protection and with the focus of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). Results of the UNDP/REC Sustainable Development Programme for the Tisza River Basin should also be taken into account. Moreover, as in the case of the previous task force, cooperation with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO) will be established.

2. Strengthening the capability of joint bodies

Objectives: Provision of guidance to joint bodies in the region to strengthen their ability in integrated river basin management and water protection. Difficulties encountered in implementing the Convention arising from differences in administrative practice, in management and protection responsibilities or in water use rights in riparian countries will be also examined, weak points of management discovered, and guidance for jointly developing water resources management and setting priorities provided. The results of the activity will be widely disseminated and facilitate future cooperation.

Work accomplished: Workshop "From dispute to consensus - the role of binational and multinational commissions on transboundary waters", Bonn, Germany, 13-14 September 1999.

On the Water Convention's web site (<http://www.unece.org/env/water>) basic information on bilateral and multilateral agreements and on joint bodies has been included and permanently updated.

Workshop "Transboundary Waters in the Newly Independent States" (Moscow, 31 March - 1 April 2003), within the project jointly developed by UNECE, UNEP/ROE, the Ministry for Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the NGO "ECOTERRA".

Lead Party: Slovakia

Participating Parties: To be decided

Main partners: Working Group on Legal Aspects, Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, UNEP, representatives of secretariats of joint bodies.

II. ACTIVITIES NOT COMPLETED UNDER THE CURRENT WORK PLAN AND POSSIBLE NEW ACTIVITIES STEMMING FROM ACCOMPLISHED WORK

Below is a list of possible future areas of work. These are either tasks not accomplished under the current work plan or possible new areas of work according to the results of the work developed. The activities related to these topics, such as drafting of guidance documents, organization of seminars and workshop or setting up of implementation projects, are to be defined.

3. Public participation in water management *(former programme element 2.1)*

Objectives: The Meeting of the Parties will assist countries to comply with provisions of relevant conventions, protocols and other binding and non-binding instruments to make policy- and decision-making on integrated management of catchment areas a matter of concern to both public authorities and the public. Guidance will be given to countries and joint bodies so that public participation can lead to an improvement in the quality and implementation of, and commitment to, decisions, increased accountability, increased transparency and increased public awareness of water management issues.

Work accomplished: Draft guidelines on public participation in water management (MP.WAT/2000/4, 6 and Add.1) prepared by a group of invited experts.

Workshop on Public Participation in Water Management (The Hague, Netherlands, 18 September 2001).

Work to be undertaken: Draw up policy guidelines on public participation in water management for consideration by the Parties at their fourth meeting, taking into account relevant provisions of the Aarhus Convention, the EIA Convention, the work developed by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the EU guidance on public participation in relation to the Water Framework Directive, as well as the results of the testing of the guidance in the Pilot River basins.

Lead Party: [Netherlands]

Participating Parties: To be decided. By December 2001, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Slovakia have informed the secretariat of their readiness to contribute to this programme area.

Main partners: To be decided. By December 2001, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), the NGOs Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation and the NGO MAMA-86 have informed the secretariat of their readiness to contribute.

4. Water management and protection of the marine environment

Note: The secretariat has been invited to participate in a partnership (FreshCo partnership) launched at the WSSD by UNEP/GPA and UCC-Water (Denmark) on Linking Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

The overall objective of the partnership is to promote more efficient methods for management of fresh, coastal and marine water resources, including protection of the productivity and biodiversity of aquatic ecosystems (for more information, please consult <http://www.ucc-water.org/FreshCo>). The Working Group may wish to discuss the ways and means of participation in the partnership activities and which joint activities could be established under this area of work.

Objectives: To be decided.

Lead Party: To be decided.

Participating Parties: To be decided. The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany and the Polish Ministry of Environment are among the partners of FreshCo.

Main partners: To be decided. Among others, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO), the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the EUCC - The Coastal Union -, the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) participate to the partnership.

5. Ecosystem approach in water management (former programme element 2.3)

Objectives: To be decided. Experience drawn from the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive could drive the future work, in particular for what concerns implementation in countries in transition.

Lead Party: To be decided. The Bureau is consulting delegations to explore their interest.

Participating Parties: To be decided.

Main partners: To be decided. Cooperation with the European Commission and the Ramsar Convention should be established.

Work accomplished: Seminar on Ecosystems Approach to Water management (Oslo, May 1991).

1993 Guidelines on the ecosystems approach in water management (ECE/ENVWA/31).

Workshop on approaches and tools for river basin management: experience drawn from the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (Bratislava, 15-16 October 2001).

Note: The work under this programme element has mainly focused on issues related to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

The conclusions and recommendations of the workshop on approaches and tools for river basin management: experience drawn from the implementation of the EU Water Framework

Directive (Bratislava, 15-16 October 2001) could drive the future work. In particular the workshop identified the following actions to be taken:

- *The Working Group should serve as a platform for disseminating the work on the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive developed by EU Working Groups and Expert Advisory Forums, in order to facilitate cooperation in basins shared with non-EU countries. In particular, it was suggested to develop guidance on step-wise approaches for introducing concepts and principles of the EU Water Framework Directive into the water management of non-EU countries.*
- *The guidance document on the economic analysis developed in the framework of the EU Common Strategy should be tested in countries in transition and adapted, if required, to the specific conditions of these countries;*
- *A programme element that aims at transferring early experience on ways of better integrating water management issues into other sector policies from EU Member States to countries in transition could be considered for inclusion into the 2003-2006 work plan.*

6. Integrated management of transboundary water in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)

Objectives: Work in this area should build on recent initiatives for the region, e.g. the EECCA environmental strategy, the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development (EU Water Initiative), the Partnership on Water, Environment and Security in Central Asia. The work should address the region's problems related to sustainable use of water, demand management and sharing of water among countries, ecosystem approach in water management, including aspects of biodiversity and integration of land and water management; pollution prevention and rehabilitation of damaged ecosystems. Indicators for sustainable water management could be developed. This programme area should also assist in the implementation of the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive at least in the river basins the EECCA countries share with EU member countries

Lead Party: To be decided.

Participating Parties: All countries from EECCA are partners to the Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development. Under the overall leadership of Denmark, the UNECE secretariat and the Russian Federation are now responsible for Transboundary River Basins. Russian Federation, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Georgia expressed their willingness to participate in a group of experts to develop recommendations on regulatory/legal, organizational, economic and technical aspects of the joint use and protection of transboundary watercourses in EECCA, on the condition that donor countries would assist in providing travel support for eligible participants.

Main partners: To be decided. Cooperation with the European Commission, the OECD, UNEP, UNDP, WHO/EURO, OSCE and the Global Water Partnership is foreseen. Cooperation with the Working Group on Legal Aspects and with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) could also be established.

Work accomplished: International workshop “Interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary river basins” (Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation, 4-6 December 2002) in which the “Recommendations on issues of interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary watercourses and their rational use with due regard for water quality aspects” were presented.

Workshop on “Transboundary Waters in the Newly Independent States” (Moscow, 31 March - 1 April 2003).

Work to be undertaken: At the International workshop “Interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary river basins” (Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation, 4-6 December 2002) the participants invited the Convention’s governing bodies - including the Working Group on Water Management - to establish a group of experts to develop recommendations on regulatory/legal, organizational, economic and technical aspects of the joint use and protection of transboundary watercourses in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), with the aim to secure effective cooperation of States on this issue.

At the Workshop on “Transboundary Waters in the Newly Independent States” (Moscow, 31 March - 1 April 2003), there was a specific request for capacity-building activities and the exchange of experience between managers of transboundary waters, mainly staff of joint bodies, in order to create a framework for the cross-fertilization between the different bodies acting in the region and to allow transfer of capacity from successful institutions from outside the region. This could be achieved through a series of workshops, each focusing on specific aspects of cooperation (e.g. legal, regulatory and institutional framework; joint monitoring and assessment, including exchange of information, information systems, early warning and alarm systems; pollution prevention, control and reduction; allocation of water resources and sustainable use of water; river basin management plans and relation with the EU Water Framework Directive - integrated water resources management including the ecosystem approach, environmental objectives and public participation; relation and policy integration with regional seas; flood prevention and flood protection). The workshops should be attended by managers of transboundary waters in the region, by representative of well-established joint commissions (for the session on integration with coastal and marine resources management, by representative of regional seas commissions), by experts from international organizations, the private sector, NGOs. During the workshop, the situation in the different joint bodies and the level and development of cooperation related to the theme should be analyzed, participants be brought to review their approach and propose solutions. As an outcome, general recommendations for the region, as well as specific recommendations for specific river basins should be drawn and deadlines for their implementation set.

The workshops should be hosted in rotation by the different countries and associated with a visit to a joint commission, which would present its structure, organization, management strategies, main problems and achievements.

The workshops’ proceedings would constitute a series of publications, which would give a general and specific guidance for transboundary water management in the region.

These activities should span over a period of 3 years.

7. Water and industrial accidents (*former programme element 2.8*)

Objectives: The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Conference of the Parties to the

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents will implement their joint programme on water and industrial accidents, further develop the recommendations contained therein, and provide advice to joint bodies and other relevant authorities, organizations and institutions to improve the safety and management of industrial installations so as to prevent transboundary accidental water pollution, taking into account the achievements of the joint bodies for the protection of the Elbe, Danube and Rhine.

Work accomplished: Workshop on prevention and limitation of industrial accidents with effects on transboundary waters, Berlin, Germany, 7-9 May 1998 (MP.WAT/WG.1/1998/7).

UNECE Seminar on the prevention of chemical accidents and limitation of their impact on transboundary waters, Hamburg, Germany, 4-6 October 1999 (MP.WAT/SEM.1/1999/3), organized jointly under the auspices of the Meetings of the Parties/Signatories to both Conventions.

Workshop and exercise on industrial safety and water protection in transboundary river basins (Tiszaújváros, Hungary, 3-5 October 2001) and Polish-Russian transboundary response exercise and workshop “Kotki 2002” (Ketrzyn, Poland 13-15 June 2002)

Main partners: Meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health, IWAC, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), UNEP, WHO/EURO, European Commission.

7.1 Water and industrial accidents: joint measures *(former programme element 2.8.1)*

Work to be undertaken:

Implement the short-term activities set out in the joint programme (MP.WAT/SEM.1/1999/3, annex I) to promote cooperation and prompt communication in the event of an industrial accident, further develop the joint programme and adapt it to changing circumstances.

Joint activities include the identification of hazardous activities for the purposes of both Conventions, safety guidelines/best practices for the prevention of accidental water pollution, notification and alarm systems, cross-border contingency plans and the organization of joint response exercises, such as the response exercise tentatively scheduled for 2004 within the framework of the International Commission for the Protection of the Elbe. These joint activities also include the drawing up of safety guidelines for pipelines and tailing dams, and possible adaptation of existing guidelines to the specific needs and circumstances of river basins.

Joint activities also include the evaluation of the country responses (see programme element 7.2) and the compilation of an assessment report for submission to the fourth meeting of the Parties in 2006.

Upon request, assistance will be provided for the interim implementation of the Protocol on civil liability for damage to transboundary waters caused by industrial accidents.

Lead Parties: Hungary (for water issues) and Switzerland (for industrial safety issues).

Participating Parties: Armenia, Croatia, Czech republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Switzerland, Ukraine.

7.2 Water and industrial accidents: measures to be undertaken by each Party *(former programme element 2.8.2)*

Work to be undertaken: The long-term activities set out in the joint programme (MP.WAT/SEM.1/1999/3, annex I) will be carried out by each of the Parties (by countries with market economies within a period of five years, and by countries with economies in transition within a period of ten years). These activities include the adaptation of national legal systems, the setting-up of administrative procedures and the implementation of technical measures at the level of industrial installations and within production practices. Each Party will report to the respective meetings of the Parties about achievements (reporting by countries with market economies in 2005 and by countries with economies in transition in 2010).

The format of the reporting scheme and criteria for compliance will be established by the joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents (see programme element 7.1) and sent to countries with market economy in 2005 for the 2006 assessment of achievements.

Lead Party: none, to be implemented by each Party.

Participating Parties: all Parties from countries with market economies for the review to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties in 2006.