



**Ninth Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention)
Geneva/hybrid, 29 September – 1 October 2021**

Part 2: Accelerating progress on transboundary water cooperation to achieve sustainable development

Panel 3: Accelerating progress on transboundary water cooperation to achieve sustainable development.

Dear Moderator and panellists,
dear Chairperson of the Convention,
Ministers, Heads of delegations,
Excellencies, high representatives of the UNECE,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
dear colleagues.

Slovenia has the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The implementation of the entire Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development rests upon reaching SDG 6 and other water-related goals and targets. Given the fact that more than 60% of all freshwater is shared between two or more countries, reaching SDG 6 is not possible without advancing transboundary water cooperation.

Support to integrated water resources management and transboundary water cooperation has been a mainstay of the EU Water Diplomacy. The concept of water as a regional public good, and water cooperation as promoter of regional integration are its key principles. Europe with its longstanding tradition of successful transboundary water cooperation is not only a good example that this cooperation is beneficial for both downstream and upstream countries; it also has a duty to share its experience and promote its benefits.

Investment in the establishment, strengthening and adaptation of platforms and institutions for transboundary water cooperation and promoting legal frameworks such as the Water Convention are essential. The EU has engaged in this effort through policy dialogue and technical assistance & capacity development, including by supporting the use of convention's excellent tools such as the Principles for Effective Joint Bodies for Transboundary Water Cooperation. The new practical guide for the developing of agreements to be adopted at this Meeting of the Parties will be another useful instrument in this regard.

Given the cross-cutting nature of water, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach is needed, including in the transboundary context. We need to understand well the interplay



of different nexuses – food, energy, health, ecosystems, climate, peace and security - in order to devise adequate responses or establish the right entry points for cooperation. For example, joint vulnerabilities or risk assessments on transboundary effects of climate change can be a path to identifying common solutions, paving the way to joint cooperation. The Water Convention's nexus approach gives a good example and a lot of guidance and practical experience.

In the run up to 2023 UN Mid-term Review on the Decade of Water conference, the EU and its Member States will actively encourage accelerated action, raised ambitions, and strive to secure a meaningful outcome. As conference will have no negotiated outcome, a collaborative preparatory process and mobilising like-minded countries is even more important. We are actively looking for synergies and common political messages that will feed greater ambition and action into the conference, instilling the need for transboundary cooperation as a prerequisite for reaching the SDG 6 and other water-related goals.

Thank you for your attention.
