



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Experiences from Parties in the implementation of the Water Convention: The current experience of Estonia

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The Water Convention



A legal and institutional framework for **transboundary water cooperation** contributing to **sustainable development**, international **peace** and **security**.



A **unique platform** to discuss progress of **transboundary water cooperation** worldwide under the umbrella of the **United Nations**



Opened to all interested countries, with **more than 130 countries** exchanging experiences and knowledge to prompt progress in cooperation



The Water Convention:

Main objective:

Foster cooperation over transboundary waters in order to **ensure** that they are **sustainably and equitably managed**



Water Convention Key Principles

Principle of prevention

Principle of equitable and
reasonable utilization

Principle of cooperation

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The Water Convention: How did it help Estonia to improve collaboration with neighbouring countries over shared resources?

- The Water Convention helped to compose main topics in bilateral agreement with Russia, and cooperation agreement was signed in 1997
- The Water Convention indicated to main water management elements: quality, quantity, joint monitoring programs
- The Water Convention indicated to relevant joint commission working groups, we followed Convention working groups as IWRM and monitoring and assessment
- Water management safety issues we elaborated were based on Convention principles

Estonian-Russian agreement since 1997



The Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Russian Federation have concluded an agreement aimed at organizing co-operation between the Parties in the protection and sustainable use of transboundary waters and their ecosystems. On the basis of the agreement, an Estonian-Russian joint commission for the protection and sustainable use of transboundary waters was established in 1997. **The objects of the agreement** are transboundary waters belonging to the **Narva River Basin**, including Lake Peipus.

Estonia-Russia, transboundary waters



River Narva basin is a transboundary basin, shared between Estonia and Russia, small areas of it also extend to Latvia and to Belarus



Co-operation area - Lake Peipsi/River Narva basin – is situated in Baltic Sea (Gulf of Finland) basin on the eastern part of Republic of Estonia and on the northwest part of Russian Federation and extends from north to south 370 km. It is boundary area between European Union and Russian Federation.



Co-operation area is in River Narva basin

Total area of the basin is 56 225 km²
from which on Republic of Estonia is 17 145 km²,
and on the Russian Federation 39 080 km²
(it includes a little part of headwaters of River Velikaja tributaries,
which are situated in the territory of Latvia).

Lake Peipsi



- Lake Peipsi is fourth largest lake in Europe and at the same time it is largest transboundary lake in Europe
- Total area of Lake Peipsi on its average water level is 3 555 km², 44 % of the lake is situated in Republic of Estonia and 56 % in Russian Federation
- Lake Peipsi is very good fish lake, important for Estonia and for Russia.

River Narva

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- River Narva is short river (77 km) but its quite affluent, its average water flow is $400 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$, yearly outflow is 12.5 km^3
- 85 % of the River Narva basin forms Lake Peipsi basin (including lake area). From tributaries the most important is River Pljussa on the territory of Russian Federation (its basin area is 6550 km^2 , mean water flow is $50 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$).

River Narva



- Narva River has energetic importance: on the river there is Narva hydroenergy plant which belongs to Russian Federation with total power 125 MW. On the Republic of Estonia there are two powerful heat energy plants with total power 2400 MW, water from River Narva is used for their system cooling purposes.
- Water uptake from River Narva is used for drinking water in Narva (which population is 70 000)

Basis for co-operation

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- 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- 1999 Protocol on Water and Health of the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- 1997 Agreement Between Republic of Estonia and Russian Federation on the Protection and Sustainable Use of Transboundary Watercourses
- 1997 Joint Commission between Republic of Estonia and Russian Federation on the protection and sustainable use of transboundary was formed, today we have 2 working groups under this Commission



Working group on integrated water resources management

- Questions about organisation of water management, elaboration and implementation of water management and water protection programs
- Analyse and assessment of situation in water management
- Questions related to hydrotechnical installations
- Inventory of water pollution sources
- Elaboration of action plan for extraordinary situations and liquidation results of accidents
- Exchange of information
- Ensure public participation

Working group on monitoring, assessment and research

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- Elaboration of joint monitoring programmes and co-ordination of joint monitoring works
- Elaboration of agreed standpoints for transboundary waters load, water quality and situation assessment
- Analyse and assessment of water quality
- Harmonisation of monitoring programs and methods for water users.
- Organisation of scientific studies.
- Elaboration of joint databases.
- Information of public and counties about status of transboundary waters.
- Organising parallel sampling of laboratories

Estonian-Russian Joint Commission Meetings

Meetings of the Estonian-Russian Joint Commission for the protection and sustainable use of transboundary waters and working groups are held once a year, alternately in Estonia and Russia.

This year's meetings have been organized by the Russian side. The working groups met in June and the Joint Commission in August. Due to the Corona outbreak, all meetings on the Web took place this year as well. 30 officials and experts involved from the Estonian side; a total of 65 people took part, there were 61 presentations, 33 of them were from the Estonian side.

The following work has been done in the Working Group on Monitoring , Assessment and Research :
an assessment has been made of the condition of Lake Peipus and the condition of the rivers flowing into the lake;
reference has been made to the need to further reduce diffuse pollution from agriculture.

The Integrated Water Resources Management Working Group discussed measures taken on both sides to control, control and reduce pollution
The range of topics discussed was very wide, starting from the water management situation
in the Lake Peipus basin and from floods and the reduction of their impact to the elimination of residual pollution.

Problems to be solved

The implementation of water management plans should become more coordinated, sub-targets must be harmonize, and continued funding for research and investment on both sides of the lake is essential; should not reduce / cut costs:

1.Regarding the monitoring of the state of the environment - monitoring provide information on the changes taking place in the state of the environment. Based on these, we can make decisions when developing more efficient water management measures.

2.For aid to agricultural farms (storage / storage / spreading of manure, manure, silage, chemicals).

This must be done in cooperation with farmers, ie the fieldbook and other techniques.

3.Promote the implementation of new technologies (integrated solutions supporting development are important, implementation of principles of sustainable development in the entire Lake Peipus river basin). We need to speed up with this.

Main achievements:

- Organisation of comprehensive co-operation, the same understanding of problems and the same targets
- Systematical exchange of information about situation in water management and water quality
- Approaching of principles and criteria about situation of water bodies
- Joint monitoring on Lake Peipsi and on Narva reservoir based on agreed monitoring programme
- Elaboration of water management plans in both side

Other concrete use of the Water Convention for Estonia:

- Benefits of cooperation - not only economical, also political, water diplomacy level
- Convention helped to share knowledge about Estonian water worldwide,
World Water Forums, World Water Development Report, Panel Water and Peace



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Thank you!

