



## 2021 - What a year it has been!

As we approach the end of 2021, we look back on another unusual year. Despite all odds, we delivered on our mandate and facilitated cooperation over shared waters around the globe and advanced the water, sanitation and health agenda. Here are some of this year's highlights.

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### #MOP9: Growing global interest in transboundary water cooperation and the Water Convention

Over 800 participants, from more than 110 countries, both Parties and non-Parties to the Water Convention, along with other key stakeholders attended the first hybrid **Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (MOP9)** from 29 September to 1 October 2021. More than 30 high-level participants (Ministers, heads of organizations and others) confirmed that transboundary water cooperation is crucial for peace and preventing conflict and often lead to benefits beyond water. [Ministers from The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal signed a declaration](#) with a commitment to establish a framework for cooperation on the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin.



[Learn more](#)

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## Six publications launched!

- The [second report on the SDG indicator 6.5.2](#) (UNECE, UNESCO, 2021) shows that only 24 countries worldwide have all their shared waters covered by operational arrangements for water cooperation.
- The [second report on the Water Convention](#) proves that the [Convention effectively supports cooperation](#).
- Several challenges are still faced by countries in cooperating for the joint management of transboundary waters. The [Practical guide on the](#)

[development of agreements and other arrangements for transboundary cooperation](#) helps countries in their negotiations to develop agreements.

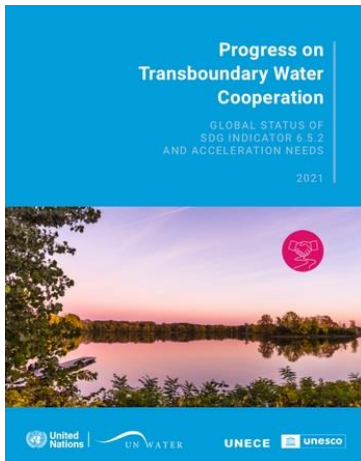
- The [Handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context](#) provides methods and good practices to help share waters in an equitable and reasonable way.
- [Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins](#) shows how to overcome silo approaches for the benefit of all.
- And [Funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development](#) explains financial needs and possible financing sources to support these endeavours.



Mr. Aaron Salzberg, Director of the Water Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, highlights some of the key aspects of the “Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangements for Transboundary Water Cooperation”.



## Countries worldwide must accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation, shows the latest SDG 6.5.2 report



Results of the [second Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) report on transboundary water cooperation](#), published by [UNECE](#) and [UNESCO](#) (co-custodian agencies for SDG indicator 6.5.2) on behalf of UN-Water, suggests that not nearly enough operational arrangements for transboundary water cooperation are in place. While 153 countries share transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers, only 24 countries report having operational arrangements in place for all their transboundary waters. This level of cooperation contrasts with one of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework to ensure that all transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers are covered by operational arrangements by 2030 (SDG 6.5.2). The rate of progress therefore needs to more than quadruple.

[Learn more](#)



## Togo joined UN Water Convention



Togo is the fifth country outside the pan-European region to accede to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), for which UNECE ensures the Secretariat. This comes as more and more countries – especially in Africa – are joining the legal and intergovernmental framework of the Water Convention to support cooperation on shared water resources, following accessions by Guinea Bissau (2021), Ghana (2020), Senegal and Chad (2018).

[Learn more](#)

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## Launch of the 5th reporting cycle under the Protocol on Water and Health

Every three years, Parties to the Protocol and other States submit national summary reports, which provide comprehensive data of the national situation with environment, WASH and health and allow for analysis of regional trends. New reports by Protocol Parties and other States are due on 20 April 2022 and will provide a rich data hub for the pan-European region on existing environmental and health legislation and policies, COVID-19 related WASH measures as well as a number of priority thematic areas covered by the Protocol.

[Learn more](#)

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## Protocol on Water and Health: 12th meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting discussed future regional priorities on water, sanitation, hygiene and health

On 17 November, the [Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting](#) held a hybrid meeting to discuss current situation with environment, WASH and health and the priority action needed in the pan-European region. Specifically, countries discussed:

- [New programme of work for the Protocol for 2023-2025](#) currently under development: Delegates exchanged views on the future work under the Protocol, including regional priorities on water, sanitation, hygiene and health, persisting challenges and emerging threats. Special consideration was given to the measures taken in the area of WASH and health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the national targets set by States to strengthen public health preparedness, response and recovery.

[Learn more](#)

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## COP26 – Water and Climate

Most climate change impacts are transmitted through the water cycle. At the 26th [UN Climate Change Conference \(COP26\)](#) in Glasgow, the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat was involved in several events at the first-ever [Water & Climate Pavilion](#) (all sessions are available online). UNECE's Executive Secretary Olga Algayerova called for more ambitious water action in her speech delivered at the [COP26 Water Action Event](#).





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## Fresh from the press!

- 13 December 2021: **National meeting for the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources of The Gambia** on the opportunities and challenges related to accession to the UN Water Conventions [Watch the news coverage](#)
- 14 December 2021: **Regional workshop on the global water conventions for Senegal and The Gambia basin countries**, in Banjul, The Gambia
- **Water cooperation** in transboundary basins is a major means of achieving peace [Read more](#)
- Liquid Connector: Why **Water Cooperation is Crucial** in the 21st Century [Read more](#)

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## 2022 – A special year ahead!

The [6th session of the Meeting of the Parties of the Protocol on Water and Health](#), a high-level intergovernmental meeting on advancing the water, sanitation, hygiene and health agenda in the pan-European region, will be held on in Geneva 16-18 November 2022 (also hybrid).

2022 will also mark the **30th anniversary of the Water Convention**, which was adopted in Helsinki, Finland, in 1992. Festivities are planned in Tallinn, Estonia, for the end of June 2022.

Many more activities have been planned. We will keep you updated in our next newsletter!

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**We must promote water security for all. This includes transboundary water cooperation which can help build peace and prevent conflicts. To achieve this I encourage all governments to accede, implement and comply with the two UN global water conventions.**

**Amina J. Mohammed**

*Deputy Secretary-General  
of the United Nations*



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