



Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference

Geneva, Palais des Nations, Salle XVIII, and online, 12 – 13(am) April 2022

The Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference (Geneva/hybrid, 12–13 April 2022) is a preparatory event for the UNECE region, aimed at contributing a regional perspective to the effective review and implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will identify and further inspire initiatives that create impact and contribute to the implementation of the Decade, and encourage States and other stakeholders from the region to announce voluntary commitments at the United Nations 2023 Water Conference.

The meeting will be chaired by H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Chairperson of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Interpretation: English, French, Russian

12 April 2022, Tuesday

10.00 - 10.25 Opening session

- H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations Office in Geneva (in person)
- H.E. Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UNECE (online)
- H.E. Mr. Gilbert F. Hounbo, UN-Water Chair (online)
- H.E. Mr. Jamshed Khamidov, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to the United Nations Office in Geneva (in person)
- H.E. Ms. Nathalie Olijslager, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office in Geneva (in person)

10.25 - 11.40 **Session 1. Make drinking water and sanitation available, safe and affordable for all**

Where do we stand with access to water and sanitation in the pan-European Region? Progress, gaps and opportunities, Mr. Oliver Schmoll, Programme Manager, WHO Regional Office for Europe (online)

Using the Protocol on Water and Health and its tools in achieving on the SDGs and the Water Action Decade: Serbia's experience in target setting and equitable access to water and sanitation, Ms. Biljana Filipovic Djusic, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia (online)

Water and Sanitation Safety Plans in Communities in Western Balkans (Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Romania, Ms. Natasha Dokovska, Journalists for Human Rights, North Macedonia (in person)

Short statements

- Mr. Oliver Loebel, Secretary General, EurEau (European Federation of Water Services) (online)
- Ms. Darja Istenič, Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe and the University of Ljubljana (online)

11.40 - 13.00 **Session 2. Tackle water pollution, conserve ecosystems and biodiversity and apply circular economy policies**

Lessons learned from the work to reduce water pollution in the Danube River Basin and its acceleration potential for achievement of the objectives of the International Water Action Decade and the SDGs, Mr. Adam Kovacs and Mr. Ivan Zavadsky, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) (online)

Accelerating efforts to conserve and restore ecosystems in the Aral Sea Basin at regional and national levels, Mr. Shamsiddin Kurbonov, Director, Information Analytical and Resources Centre of the Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan (in person)

European Green Deal and Water Policy for SDG 6 implementation in the European Union, Ms. Marijana Mance, International Relations Officer, European Commission, DG Environment (in person)

Creating and implementing a circular scheme for sanitation, Mr. Laurent Brunet, Directeur Technique, Eau France, Suez and FP2E (in person)

Short statements

- Ms. Anna Maria Marino, Liaison Officer on Arctic and Oceans, Youth and Environment Europe (online)
- Mr. Dirk Glas, Join for Water NGO (online)

13.00 - 15.00 **Lunch break**

15.00 - 16.30 **Session 3. Strengthen water governance at national and transboundary levels**

Remarks on progress in the water sector at national and transboundary levels in Kazakhstan, Mr. Serik Kozhaniyazov, Vice-Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan (in person)

The role of the National Policy Dialogue in Armenia in advancing the SDGs, Ms. Lilit Abrhamyan, Ministry of Environment of Armenia (in person)

Governance aspects of transboundary water cooperation based on the results of the SDG indicator 6.5.2, Mr. Aurélien Dumont (UNESCO) and Ms. Sonja Koeppel (UNECE) (online and in person)

International Joint Commission – UNECE Regional Preparatory Presentation, Ms. Jane Corwin, U.S. Chair, International Joint Commission (online)

Major solutions achieved in transboundary water cooperation in the Sava River basin, Dr. Aleš Bizjak, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia, and Mr. Samo Grošelj, International Sava River Basin Commission (in person)

Short statements

- Mr. Harry Liiv, Special Envoy for Transboundary Waters, Ministry of the Environment, Estonia, and Chair of the Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention (online)
- Mr. Günter Liebel, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism, Austria (in person)
- Mr. Ergi Bregasi, Youth and Environment Europe, and EDEN Center (in person)
- Ms. Ruth A. Richardson, International Network of Liberal Women (online)
- Mr. Edouard Boinet, International Network of Basin Organizations (online)

16.30 - 18.00 **Session 4. Strengthen climate resilience, reduce risks of floods and droughts and strengthen cooperation among water using sectors (agriculture, energy, etc.) to reconcile competing needs**

Introductory remarks to the session, Mr. Octavian Bivol, Regional Chief for UNDRR in Europe and Central Asia (online)

Mechanisms for strengthening climate resilience in transboundary cooperation in the Chu-Talas Basin, Ms. Indira Akbozova, Secretariat of the Chu Talas Water Management Commission (in person)

The Nexus Assessment process in the transboundary Drin River basin, Mr. Ylber Mirta, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia (in person)

Integrated Drought Management Programme contribution towards SDGs and water related goals in Central and East European Region, Dr. Anna Smetanova, Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (online)

Short statements

- H.E. Mr. Stefano Canti, Minister of Territory and Environment, Agriculture, Civil Protection and Relations with the Autonomous Public Works State Corporation, Republic of San Marino (in person)
- Ms. Rojina Manandhar, Programme Officer, UNFCCC (online)
- Mr. Matthew Griffiths, Senior Programme Manager, OECD (online)

13 April 2022, Wednesday

10.00 - 11.20 Session 5. Improve knowledge, management and protection of groundwater

Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System (DIKTAS) project: achievements and its contribution to SDGs, Prof. Zoran Stevanovic, University of Belgrade, UNESCO expert (online)

Pilot Project “Design and testing of a multipurpose transboundary groundwater monitoring network in the Extended Drin River Basin”. Main outputs and contribution to SDGs, Ms. Morgana Marku, Water Resources Management Agency of Albania (online)

Catalyst action of International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) for SDG6 implementation at scientific, professional and societal levels, Mr. Marco Petitta, IAH (in person)

Mapping groundwater data and indicators at EU-scale in support to the evaluation of the European Water Framework Directive and of the UN SDGs implementation assessment, Ms. Dominique Darmendrail, French Geological Survey (in person)

Short statements

- Mr. Neno Kukuric, International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC) (online)
- Dr. Aleš Bizjak, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia (in person)

11.20 - 12.40 Session 6. Accelerate progress through partnerships, financing, data, research and innovation

Together for a water-secure world – Accelerating cross-sectoral action towards 2030, Ms. Janine Muzau, Policy Officer International Water Cooperation & Policy, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of Germany (online)

Bosnia and Herzegovina: International partnership on the supporting reform of the water supply and sanitation sector, Mr. Igor Palandzic, World Bank, Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, Europe and Central Asia (online)

Water-oriented Living Labs for a Water-Smart Society, Mr. Durk Krol, Executive Director, Water Europe (online)

Short statements

- Mr. Alex Mung, Head of Water and Environmental Resilience, World Economic Forum (online)
- Mr. Almotaz Abadi, Managing Director, Water, Environment and Blue Economy Division, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) secretariat (in person)
- Ms. Rukan Manaz, United Nations Capital Development Fund (in person)

12.40 - 13.00 Closing session

- Conclusions by the Chair
- Ms. Madhushree Chatterjee, Chief, Natural Resources and Interlinkages Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (online)