

Monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters

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

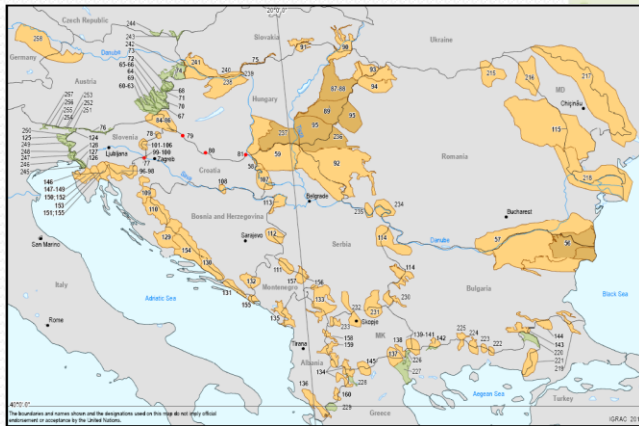
1. Rationale and background

- *Purpose is to keep the status of transboundary waters under scrutiny*
- *Article 11 of the Water Convention: The Riparian Parties shall, at regular intervals, carry out joint or coordinated assessments of the conditions of transboundary waters and the effectiveness of measures taken for the prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impact.*
- *Various technical guidelines published monitoring and assessment (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, water quality etc,) strategies for M&A, pilot projects, First Assessment*



2a. Main activities since 2009

- *Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers Lakes and Groundwaters and Executive Summary prepared, published and launched at 7th Environment for Europe Conference*
- *Wide promotion and distribution of the Second Assessment: presentations at meetings, conferences, WWF6; articles, press releases, newsletters*



2b. Main findings of the Second Assessment: common issues in the region

- *Uneven level of transboundary cooperation and related deficiencies*
- *Policy integration and coherence remains weak across the region; difficult to put into practice, painful trade offs. Stronger water and environmental governance needed!*
- *Agriculture (diffuse pollution, water use)*
- *Hydromorphological changes*
- *Climate change – projected impacts vary across the region, few studies & little coordination at transboundary level*



2b. Some findings of the Second Assessment: management response and the way forward

- *Western and Central Europe demonstrates that recent efforts in environmental policies have brought fruits but underlines that long-term political commitment is needed. Strengthening transboundary cooperation is needed for effective implementation of EU WFD*
- *SEE: Strengthening intersectoral cooperation and RBM plans needed, and application of IWRM; Approximation to the EU: need to take advantage of it and accelerate it, including application of EU laws (in particular waste water treatment), strengthen enforcement*
- *Caucasus, Central Asia: Moving to progressive water legislation and IWRM but accompanying proper enforcement and institutional reforms are necessary to make a difference*



2c. Some findings of the Second Assessment: management response and the way forward

- *Positive in Central Asia: Bilateral cooperation agreements on shared water resources (RU-CN, KZ-CN; Chu-Talas cooperation) and recognition of the need to strengthen regional framework; perspective for involvement of non-UNECE countries with Water Convention's opening; EE: benefits of institutionalizing cooperation should motivate further efforts*
- *In Central Europe, UWWT Directive has spurred wastewater treatment efficiency; in EE Reducing pollution from waste water is constrained by limited availability of financing for the substantial investments required*
- *Relevant across the region but acute in Central Asia & SEE: Planning of new infrastructure and operation of the existing ones should take into account the upstream-downstream needs and considerations, including possible negative impacts on the ecosystem services and economic activities as well as the evolving climatic conditions*



3. Major achievements and challenges

- *A comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the status of transboundary waters in the European and Asian parts of the ECE region obtained*
- *More than 150 transboundary rivers, 40 lakes , some 200 transboundary groundwaters & 25 Ramsar sites or other wetlands of transboundary importance have been assessed in close cooperation with the national environment and water administrations.*
- *Capacity building: subregional workshops (5) , exchanges & the self-assessment in the process*
- *Serves to inform, guide and stimulate further action by different actors*
- *Great partnership: Ramsar, GWP-Med, IWAC, UNEP-GRID Europe, IGRAC, basin commissions, donors etc*
- *Identification of gaps, issues on which there is poor information*
- *Active participation: also non-UNECE countries & non-Parties*



4. Lessons learnt for future work

- *Process as important as final product for capacity building & exchange of experience*
- *Strategic partnerships needed*
- *Intersectoral coordination at national level! (broad expertise needed)*
- *Much information on status and pressures, but what about the impact of responses?*
- *Focused information collection, identify complementary information sources*



5. Suggested future work in this area

- *3rd assessment in 8-10 years time and a “special edition” assessment in 2015*
- *Special edition focus: water-food-energy nexus*
 - *Starting point: Water, energy and food sectors strongly interlinked > impacts & trade-offs, also potential synergies. How are they being addressed or how could they be addressed?*
 - *Representative basins: all subregions, N-S, E-W+ basins outside the region*
 - *Link constructively with the work plan (NPDs)*
 - *Broader involvement, e.g. concerned sectors and main water users*
 - *Inter-sectoral basin level meetings*
 - *Targeted dissemination of findings*



5b. Thematic scope of the nexus assessment

- *Different water uses and their requirements*
- *Water availability, regulation, storage, resource augmentation*
- *Opportunities: additional benefits & integration*
- *Climate change & extremes: impacts on different sectors, adaptation*
- *Energy: needs, production, energy mix & trends*
- *Food: demands, agricultural production (rain-fed, irrigated, wastewater reuse), trends*
- *Water-intensity of production, possibilities for savings & increasing efficiency*
- *Relative resource scarcity and productivity*
- *Policies, drivers*
- *Governance, transboundary cooperation & how it interfaces with intersectoral processes*



5c. Suggested future work in this area

- *The supervising group: a Nexus Task Force to cover for WGMA in 2013-2015*
- *Exchanges with potential partners & identification of methodological expertise on-going*
- *Interest among countries & commissions being explored with a call for proposals for basins to be assessed; deadline 31 January 2013*
- *Expert workshop on 8-9 April 2013 to discuss and refine the methodology*
- *Approach to be tested on a pilot basin*
- *2013-2014 basin level process & assessments*
- *2015 synthesis & publication*

