

UPDATE

on National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resource Management



EUWI
EU WATER INITIATIVE



September 2011, Issue 2

Dear friends,

We are happy to present a second update on activities of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on IWRM¹ in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This update covers events and activities in 2011 until September 2011.

The latest meeting under the NPDs on IWRM programme was a side event at the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference (Astana, Kazakhstan, 21–23 September 2011). The Astana Ministerial Conference was an important milestone in evaluating implementation of international environmental policies in the ECE² region, including activities under the NPDs.

In 2012, the second phase of the EUWI programme on NPDs on IWRM (led by ECE) and on water supply and sanitation and IWRM financing (led by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)) will start; the NPDs are expected to continue until at least 2015. To ensure NPDs remain an efficient instrument, regular monitoring of the NPDs activities is important.

We would like to call on the Governments of countries where NPDs are implemented to make commitments for improving the water policies as commitments under the Astana Water Action (<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/efe/Astana/Tabs/fifth/ece.astana.conf.2011.inf.40.e.pdf>).

Azerbaijan (AZ), Georgia (GE) and Republic of Moldova (MD) had committed to following actions development of the National Water Strategy (AZ); conducting NPD on IWRM in 2011-2012 (GE); continuation of the water policy dialogues implementation and elaboration of the IWRM river basin plans (MD).

We would like to encourage other countries to follow their example. NPDs will therefore support the realization of such commitments.



About National Water Policy Dialogues

NPDs on IWRM and water supply and sanitation (WSS) are the main operational instrument of the EUWI Component for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests is Chair of the EUWI regional component. ECE is the strategic partner supporting the policy dialogue process on IWRM. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is the strategic partner for water supply and sanitation.

Today the NPDs on IWRM are implemented in nine countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. In 2012, an NPD on IWRM will start in Kazakhstan.

¹ Integrated Water Resources Management

² United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



EU Water Initiative Side Event at Astana Ministerial Conference

The NPD side event “Implementation of IWRM principles at national level through the EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues and other programmes” was organized by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests, European Commission, OECD and UNECE. The meeting participants discussed the ongoing water sector reforms and experiences of implementation of NPDs in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

While opening the EUWI NPD side event, Minister of the Environment and Forest of Romania³ Mr. Laszlo Borbely stressed that “the National Policies Dialogues have made an important step forward and started to address water resource management more systematically, building on the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive and the ECE Water Convention, particularly the Convention Protocol on Water and Health. Management of transboundary waters, adaptation to climate change become more concrete (in NPD on IWRM implementation)”.

Mr. Ján Kubiš, ECE Executive Secretary, in his presentation considered that “the EUWI NPDs programme has a particular value for ECE as it serves as an instrument to strategically develop the cooperation with the European Union; the NPDs support joint implementation of both the United Nations and EU water and environmental policies. It is UNECE mandate, role and aspiration to make the bridge between EU and countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and to harmonize approaches in the pan-European region”.

According to Mr. Kubiš, the EU Water Framework incorporates principles of the ECE water related conventions and, first of all, of the Water Convention, supporting the conventions’ more effective implementation on the territory of the European Union (EU) and its borders.

In countries beyond the EU and European Neighborhood Policy region, ECE environmental conventions as flexible instruments allowing implementation of environmental regulations with lower costs, promote principles of environmental management reflected also in the EU legislation. Therefore, ECE helps to bring closer countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to the EU; it especially prepares the Central Asian countries for their closer integration with the EU.

Mr. Brendan Gillespie, Head of Environmental Performance and Information Division of the OECD,



In the photo (from left to right): Ján Kubiš, Philip Mikos, Brendan Gillespie, Laszlo Borbely, Gheorghe Salaru

informed about the strategic directions of the OECD activities under the NPDs, those are (1) the activities connected to strengthening institutions for water supply and sanitation. This includes work on mitigating over-fragmentation of water supply and sanitation systems; or making the best use of private sector participation; and (2) promoting the economic and financial dimensions of water policies.

Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova Mr. Gheorghe Salaru, Deputy Minister of Land Reclamation and Water Management of Tajikistan Mr. Anvar Zoirov; and high-level officials from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, informed participants about the progress of NPDs in their countries and presented plans for future activities within their NPDs.

Mr. Philip Mikos, Head of the Regional Programmes Neighborhood East Unit of the European Commission Development Cooperation Directorate General, discussed in his presentation lessons learned and possible orientations for the future of the EU Water Initiative.

Mr. Volker Frobarth of the German International Cooperation Society (GIZ) presented information on a GIZ transboundary water cooperation project in Central Asia and discussed issues of coordination of water projects on the national and regional levels.

NB. Please see the side event audio version and a report at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=26337>

³ The Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests is Chair of the EUWI Working Group for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

Expert Group on the ECE Water Convention Meets in Ashgabat

ASHGABAT, 2 September 2011 – A national expert group met for the first time in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The group comprised 12 experts, including two deputy ministers, and is supported by the ECE secretariat. Based on a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, the group was established to develop proposals by the Government to change legislation in accordance with the 1992 UNECE Water Convention.

The major outcome of the meeting was the definition of the workplan of the group and the identification of more than 30 legal documents to be reviewed. By the end of the year, the group plans to meet eight times in order to produce a report on the compliance of national legislation with the provisions of the Convention and recommendations on what needs to be improved.

The strength of the group is the participation of representatives from key decision-making bodies, such as the *Mejlis* (parliament), the ministries of water economy, nature protection, foreign affairs, *adalat* (justice), finance, economic development and agriculture. The national expert group is chaired by the Ministry of Water Economy.

The meeting was possible thanks to the financial support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



In the photo: members of the NPD ON IWRM National Expert Group, including Deputy-Minister of Water Economy Mr. A. Muhammedov and Deputy-Minister of Nature Protection Mr. D. Saparmuradov

Short updates on activities in 2011

15 March 2011 – First Steering Committee meeting of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM took place in Dushanbe, **Tajikistan**

The NPD in Tajikistan is mainly focused on the development of the Tajikistan Water Sector Strategy based on IWRM principles, including the river basin management approach. Transboundary water cooperation with neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, as well as Afghanistan, is another important issue on

the NPD agenda. The NPD on IWRM in Tajikistan in 2010–2012 is supported by the EU, ECE and the Government of Germany through GIZ.

29 March 2011 — Launch of National Policy Dialogue on IWRM in Georgia

The NPD kick-off meeting took place on 29 and 30 March 2011 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting was organized at the time of ongoing reforms in Georgia aimed at the liberalization of the economy and restructuring the environmental sector. An important task under the NPD on IWRM is evaluation of the existing water policies and their revision to ensure they reflect better the changing institutional context of water management in Georgia. The NPD on IWRM in Georgia is supported by the Government of Finland and the EU. The NPD Coordinator is the National Water Partnership of Georgia.



In the photo: NPD kick off meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia

In connection with the expert group meeting, meetings were held at the Delegation of the EU to Georgia and at the Georgian Parliament.

In the photo below: George Tsereteli, Deputy-Speaker of the Georgian Parliament (on the right), ECE delegation (on the left).



2 April 2011 - First Steering Committee meeting of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

As a result of discussions at the meeting, the Steering Committee proposed to establish an expert group. This group should be focused on analysing the relevance of national legislation to the Water Convention's requirements. The expert group would assist Turkmenistan in adopting the standards of the Convention, including IWRM principles at the national and transboundary levels. Proposals for capacity-building and other activities within the NPD were also discussed.

The NPD on IWRM in Turkmenistan is supported in 2010–2014 by the Government of Norway and the EU.

18 May 2011 - Renewal of EU Water Initiative activities in Kyrgyzstan

The fourth Steering Committee meeting of EUWI NPD on IWRM in Kyrgyzstan was held this year. The NPD on IWRM in Kyrgyz Republic started in 2008 but was interrupted by the political changes in 2010.

Today the NPD focuses on institutional aspects of IWRM, water legislation and application of the ECE/World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO-Europe) Protocol on Water and Health. There is close cooperation with OECD, which is implementing a pilot project in Lake Issyk-Kul basin on the use of economic instruments.

The NPD on IWRM in Kyrgyzstan in 2010–2012 is funded by the Government of Finland and the EU.



In the photo: The NPD Steering Committee Chair Mr. Chyngysbek Uzakbaev opens the meeting

16-17 June 2011 - Azerbaijan National Policy Dialogue Expert Group meeting

The Azerbaijan NPD expert group meeting aimed to discuss preparation of the NPD on IWRM of the Water Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Experts representing different ministries and agencies of Azerbaijan discussed examples of preparation of national water strategies in other countries, including members of the EU and Central Asian countries. Expert group members adopted a schedule of preparation of the governmental water resources management strategy. Representatives of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of

Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Amelioration and Water Farm OJSC and others participated in the event.

In addition, other active donors and international organizations took part, including representatives of the Delegation of the EU to Azerbaijan, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission in Azerbaijan, ECE, OECD, UNDP, IWMI-CAC and others were present.

27 - 29 June 2011 - Georgia NPD on IWRM expert group meeting

The NPD on IWRM in Georgia started in 2010; the kick-off meeting was organized on 29 and 30 March 2011 in Tbilisi. The June 2011 expert group meeting discussed the main directions of work of the NPD in Georgia and established a calendar of activities for 2011-2012.

The expert group is addressing three main topics in 2011–2012: first, preparation of the new Water Code; second, setting up targets and target dates in accordance with the ECE/WHO-Europe Protocol on Water and Health; and, third, development of a national policy for transboundary water cooperation, including preparation of a transboundary water agreement with Azerbaijan.

1 July 2011 – Preparatory meeting for the Sixth World Water Forum

A preparatory meeting for the World Water Forum to be held in Marseille, France, in March 2012, was held at the European Commission in Brussels. The European Commission coordinates the work of the twelfth Working Group under the Sixth World Water Forum preparatory process named “European cooperation with third countries in the water field”; the first meeting of the Working Group was held. A renewed strategy for the EU Water Initiative and a paper prepared by the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, “The Role of Water in the EU Development Policy”, was discussed. The ECE secretariat representative presented information on implementation of the EUWI NPDs in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The meeting participants considered the NPD experience very valuable and recommended that best practices from the NPD programme in the subregion be shared in other EUWI regions.

15 July 2011 – Information on the NPDs/IWRM at Kazakhstan National IWRM workshop

A national workshop on IWRM, “Management of Water Resources in Kazakhstan: perspectives for implementation of the national IWRM plan and its implementation at the national and basin levels”, was organized by OSCE and UNDP in Astana, Kazakhstan. An ECE secretariat representative presented information on the planned start of the EUWI NPD on IWRM in Kazakhstan in 2012. The workshop participants welcomed information on the start of the NPD in Kazakhstan, and discussed the main directions of the programme. The NPD will support implementation of IWRM in Kazakhstan by

strengthening the cooperation between different ministries and agencies concerned with water management.

15 – 17 August 2011 – EUWI NPD on IWRM stakeholder meeting “Integrated water resources management at the national and transboundary levels in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia”

The stakeholder meeting brought together more than 20 representatives of NGOs, academia, governments from countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. UNECE Secretariat representative informed about the ongoing NPDs/IWRMs in the countries. The meeting participants prepared recommendations for activities under the NPDs/IWRM on information dissemination and communication. These proposals were further used to develop the NPD on IWRM communication strategy by the UNECE Secretariat.

Elaborated by the European Commission proposal for the renewed EUWI strategy was also discussed. Recommendations of the meeting participants were collected and further were forwarded to the European Commission.

25 August 2011, Stockholm - Consultation on the on the draft Provisional Strategy Framework for the EU Water Initiative, Stockholm, Sweden

The European Union Water Initiative is global partnerships that aims at contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets set at WSSD for water WSS, within an integrated approach to water resources management. According to the adopted in 2002 strategy, the EUWI is to end in 2015. In January 2011, European Commission started preparations of a renewed Thematic Strategy for the EU Water Initiative. A first draft of the renewed EUWI strategy was prepared in July 2011 and stakeholders were invited to participate in Consultations on the strategy; the Consultations were organized within the meeting of the Multi Stakeholder Forum (MSF) of the EUWI organized within the Stockholm Water Week.

6–8 September 2011 – Fifth NPD on IWRM Steering Committee meeting and expert group meeting on the Protocol on Water and Health in the Kyrgyzstan

The fifth meeting of the NPD Steering Committee and expert group organized by OECD with the support of ECE and UNDP was held. The following topics were discussed: interim results of the OECD pilot project implemented in Lake Issyk Kul Basin, “Supporting National Policy Dialogue on Strategic Financial Planning for Water Resource Management in Kyrgyzstan”; establishment of

targets in the Chu River Basin under the UNECE/WHO-Euro Protocol on Water and Health; and preparation of river basin management plans in Kyrgyzstan. Information on the ongoing EU/UNDP project “Developing and implementing IWRM Strategy in Kyrgyzstan” and other international projects on IWRM in Kyrgyzstan were also presented and discussed. The Steering Committee also discussed future activities under the NPD.

Back to back to the Steering Committee meeting, a meeting of the Working Group on development of the Basin Plan for the Chu River Basin and setting of target indicators in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health was held.

**Calendar of activities for
October - December 2011**

Date, Venue	OCTOBER
19 /10, Tbilisi, Georgia	Official ceremony of signing NPD Georgia Memorandum of Understanding
18/10, Dushanbe, Tajikistan	Tajikistan NPD on IWRM Second Steering Committee meeting
19-20/10, Dushanbe, Tajikistan	PREPCOM Conference “Towards the Un Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): Water Cooperation Issues”
25 – 27/10, Almaty, Kazakhstan	International High Level Conference “Strengthening transboundary water cooperation in Central Asia: the role of international water law and the UNECE Water Convention and the Workshop on the Protocol on Water and Health”
Date, Venue	NOVEMBER
7 - 8/11, Bucharest, Romania	EU Water Initiative EECCA ⁴ Component Working Group meeting
12/11, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan EUWI NPD on IWRM national seminar on IWRM
29/11, Baku, Azerbaijan	NPD on IWRM Expert Group meeting
28 - 30/11r, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic	Sixth NPD on IWRM Steering Committee meeting
Date, Venue	DECEMBER
6 /12r, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	National Expert Group meeting under Turkmenistan NPD with participation of international experts
8 - 9/12, Yerevan, Armenia	Armenian NPD Seventh Steering Committee meeting
14 - 15/12, Tbilisi, Georgia	Georgia NPD on IWRM First Steering Committee meeting

⁴ Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Publications and reports

The **EUWI NPD IWRM programme brochure** in English and Russian was updated and is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=20848>

The policy brief. “Summary of Results and Lessons Learned from the Implementation of the Armenian NPD on IWRM” presents information on the ongoing reforms in the water sector and information on implementation of the NPDs on IWRM, including IWRM financing. Conclusions and lessons learned presented in the publication are relevant to other countries in the region. The Policy Brief is available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=25663>

The Note by the ECE secretariat to the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference. “EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management and vision for the future development of the dialogues” is also available on the website under the Publication link. The document gives an outline of objectives, current state and plans for the future development of the National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resource Management. The note is available in English and Russian on our web site Publications about NPDs on IWRM are available under the under the publication link (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=26370>) and also in the information about our meetings and events. (<http://live.unece.org/index.php?id=20844>)

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Dear colleagues,

We would be happy to include your contributions in the next issues of this newsletter on implementation of water policy reforms and of National Policy Dialogues.

Please send your contribution, up to 300 words, in English and/or Russian by 15 January 2012 to us at npd@unece.org.

Photos are very welcome!

Please also feel free to post your information on our [Facebook](#) page!

Yours,
EU Water Initiative NPD Team at UNECE



<http://www.unece.org/env/water/npd.html>

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