The role of UNECE in supporting transboundary water cooperation in the sub-region

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Diversity of challenges
The Water Convention

- Signed on 17 March 1992
- Entered into force on 6 October 1996
- Protocol on Water and Health adopted in 1999, entered into force in 2005
- Protocol on Civil Liability adopted in 2003
Status of ratification of the Convention

36 countries and the European Community
- **Parties**
- **Countries in accession**
- **Non Parties**

In 2003 amended to allow access to non-UNECE countries
Aims of the Convention

Protection of transboundary waters by preventing, controlling and reducing transboundary impacts

Ecologically sound and rational management of transboundary waters

Reasonable and equitable use of transboundary waters

Conservation and restoration of ecosystems
Provisions relating to Riparian Parties

- Conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements
- Establishment of joint bodies (e.g. river commissions)
- Consultation and exchange of information
- Joint monitoring and assessment
- Elaborate joint objectives and concerted action programme for their shared waters
In practice...

- Played a crucial role in the region in supporting cooperation
- Most of the existing agreements are modelled on the Convention
- Influences the work of river commissions
- “Living agreement”
Step-by-step approach

Transboundary water cooperation = long-term, complex process

⇒ step-by-step approach and continuous progress

- Cooperation from informal to formal
- Cooperation from specific issues to IWRM
- Cooperation from surface waters to groundwaters
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

OUR WATERS: JOINING HANDS ACROSS BORDERS
First Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters

140 Transboundary Rivers
30 Transboundary Lakes
70 Transboundary Aquifers
>150 experts
40 countries
International River Basins of EUROPE
Inventory of Transboundary Groundwaters
Water use by sectors

Central

EECCA

Energy

Industry

Urban

Agriculture
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Scale and severity of problem *</th>
<th>Basins in EECCA and SEE</th>
<th>Basins in Western and Central Europe</th>
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<tr>
<td>Widespread and severe</td>
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<td>Widespread but moderate</td>
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<td>Limited but severe</td>
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* In this generalization of river basins in the region; “widespread” means that the problem appears in many river basins, whereas “limited” indicates that only some basins are affected.
Objectives of the workshop

- Make a picture of water resources in the sub-region
- Agree on the political messages of the sub-regional assessment
- Talk to the potential users
- Prepare for the “next step”
Working arrangements

- The assessment is the countries’ responsibility
- Common themes in plenary
- Working Group to discuss detailed assessment of all basins and sub-basins
- Discussion on main messages
... but we should be all part of the solution