



**European Union Water Initiative
Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
(EUWI EECCA) Working Group**

Sixteenth meeting
Geneva, 2 July 2012

Report

Summary

The 16th meeting of the Working Group discussed the implementation of the European Union Water Initiative in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia through the National Policy Dialogues on integrated water resources management and water supply and sanitation. The Working Group allowed for exchange of experience among participating countries, strategic partners of the European Union Water Initiative (UNECE, OECD), the European Union and its Member States, as well as other countries and international organisations. The Working Group reviewed progress made and endorsed the Indicative Workplan for 2012-2013.

Background and attendance

1. The 16th meeting of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) Working Group took place on 2 July 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting brought together over 60 participants representing water and environmental authorities from countries of Western, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as international organisations, multilateral and bilateral donors (see Annex I). It was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forestry.
2. The objectives of the meeting were to review progress and set priorities for implementation of the EUWI in EECCA, share the experience of target countries and information about relevant projects, and endorse the work plan for the next year. The EUWI EECCA component supports the implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy and its action plans, as well as of “The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership”.
3. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Chair of the EUWI EECCA Working Group and General Director of Water Department, Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Documents and presentations from the meeting are available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29604>.
4. The meeting adopted the agenda (see Annex II).

Introduction, objectives of the meeting and welcome

5. Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Chair of the Working Group, welcomed the participants. He noted the achievements in water sector reforms in the EECCA region through the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Mr. Constantin expressed appreciation to the European Union for its commitment to support such reforms as well as to the strategic partners of the EUWI EECCA – OECD and UNECE – for their work in the region.
6. Mr. Nicola Di Pietrantonio, Programme Manager, European Commission, expressed appreciation of the progress with regard to reforms in water sector in the last years. Such progress has prompted the European Commission to double its financial contribution for implementation of EUWI in EECCA countries in the upcoming years. Mr. Di Pietrantonio confirmed the commitment of the European Commission to assist countries of the region both financially, as well as through provision of technical expertise. He stressed that the EECCA component is part of the global EUWI process. The European Commission sees EUWI as a reform process working at national level which should promote the coordination of all EU-funded water management related projects implemented in the region.
7. Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, UNECE Environment Division, stressed the role of the EUWI EECCA component as an instrument to develop cooperation between EU and non-EU countries and to promote harmonization of policies throughout the region. Mr. Keiner emphasized that the NPDs support implementation of the UN and EU water and environmental policies. UNECE is committed to ensure that the NPDs are well-tailored to the needs of the target countries and allow achieving concrete progress in each participating State.
8. Mr. Xavier Leflaive, Principal Administrator, OECD, highlighted the role of NPDs as a dialogue and exchange of experiences process. Having facilitated NPDs in EECCA countries,

OECD shared its experiences and best practice and also learned from the experiences of EECCA region. Mr. Leflaive emphasized that in 2012 a new cycle for the NPDs was initiated. This is manifested not only in the renewed support from the European Commission but also through the requests for new projects and areas of work in some countries.

Session 1. Tour de table

9. Representatives from EECCA countries presented a brief overview of the situation and highlighted most important issues for water management and economic development in respective countries. Mr. Volodya Narimanyan, Head, Water Resources Management Agency, Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia, stressed that the country is implementing the second stage of a water sector reform. The current focus is on decentralization of the water management functions from the center to local basin authorities. Development of basin management plans is on the agenda and requires reforms of economic instruments used in water resources management.

10. Mr. Sahib Hasanzade, State Agency for Water Resources under the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Azerbaijan, identified the main challenges for water resources management. These include the need to improve the legal basis for water resources management and protection, and for the safety of water infrastructure. He also noted an insufficient coordination between stakeholders responsible for water resources management. Furthermore, the challenges to be addressed include lack of economic incentives to improve water resources management and water efficiency, as well as the need to develop methodologies for water pricing.

11. Mr. George Dzamukashvili, National Water Partnership of Georgia, stressed the commitment of Georgia to approximate the EU legislation through the development of a new water law. This process would address the application of river basin approach to water management. The division of the country into river basins is an important area in the future work. Mr. Dzamukashvili emphasized the importance of public participation in water resources management. The incorporation of the mechanisms for such participation into the new water law is an important issue.

12. Mr. Muhtar Zhakenov, Committee of Water Resources under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, emphasized the high dependency of Kazakhstan on transboundary waters. On the average, transboundary rivers contribute around 44 per cent of the total volume of water resources available in the country. This places transboundary water cooperation high on Kazakhstan's agenda. Kazakhstan cooperates with the Russian Federation on the Irtysh, Ural and Tobol Rivers; with China on the Black Irtysh and Ili Rivers; with the four other Central Asian States – on the Aral Sea basin. Kazakhstan would like to increase cooperation in the framework of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).

13. Mr. Chyngyzbek Uzakbaev, Deputy Director, Department of Water Management and Melioration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic, stated that the political changes in 2010 affected the economic situation in the country. This has led to a deterioration of irrigation infrastructure. Future challenges include ensuring food security of the country, development of new irrigation infrastructure and new irrigated areas, as well as energy efficiency.

14. Mr. Anvar Kamolidinov, Ministry of Melioration and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan, stressed that Tajikistan is preparing for a reform of water resources management. The major direction is to create sustainable governance in the water sector by applying the river basin approach and developing a stable economic mechanism for water resources management.

15. Mr. Kurbangeldy Ballyev, representative of Turkmenistan in the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), stressed that water issues are strategic issues for Central Asia and Turkmenistan. Following the activities in the framework of the NPD process, Turkmenistan is now acceding to the Water Convention, which provides an important framework for IWRM implementation.

16. Mr. Rakhmatulla Nurimbetov, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, stressed that Uzbekistan does not presently participate in the NPD programme. However, a lot is being done to improve water resources management and implement the basin approach in the country. Uzbekistan is interested in cooperation with the EC, OECD and UNECE. The Government is presently considering the proposal from OECD to implement a pilot project. Uzbekistan has many priorities, including the improvement of water legislation and further implementation of IWRM. Uzbekistan advocates the implementation of IWRM at the regional level and hopes to promote further cooperation on these issues during the upcoming IFAS chairmanship of Uzbekistan.

17. Mr. Grigory Petruk, Ukraine, stressed the need for development and implementation of programs to rehabilitate water resources of the rivers Dnieper, Seversky Donets, Dniester, Danube, and Southern and Western Bug Rivers. He emphasized the urgency of developing policies for payments for water uses and discharges, which would act as incentives for rational water use.

18. Mr. Viktor Dukhovniy, Scientific and Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC), emphasized the role of the ICWC in promoting IWRM in Central Asia.

19. The Chair concluded that the introduction and implementation of river basin management clearly is a clear priority for the EECCA region. He emphasized that due consideration for environmental issues should be given in the implementation of IWRM approach and expressed the commitment of Romania to share experience and foster progress on this issue in the EECCA region.

Session 2. National Policy Dialogues in EECCA

Topic 1. Awareness and application of IWRM principles, including cost-recovery

20. Representatives of UNECE and OECD introduced the role of the NPDs in promoting the application of IWRM principles. Ms. Iulia Trombitcaia, UNECE, emphasized that work in this area builds on the EU Water Framework Directive and its daughter directives, and the Water Convention. One of the major challenges in this work is addressing national priorities and reinforcing national expertise with international experiences and best practice. Mr. Xavier Leflaive, OECD, highlighted the cost-recovery principle as an essential feature of IWRM. He emphasized the operational approach to cost recovery, as well as the role of selected instruments, such as water pricing (in WSS, irrigation, hydropower), abstraction charges, pollution charges, payments for ecosystem services, and reform of subsidies.

21. Mr. Anvar Kamolidinov, Ministry of Melioration and Water Resources of Tajikistan, described the efforts to progress towards IWRM through the Water Sector Reform. The NPD/IWRM in Tajikistan supports a working group of experts which contributes to the elaboration of the Water Sector Reform Strategy. The main aim of the Strategy is to establish economic, legal and institutional frameworks for river basin management in the country. The Strategy therefore provides for the creation of river basin management institutions, as well as separates the operational water management functions from water policy and regulation. Major challenges include the

transfer of property rights for irrigation and drainage systems to water user associations. The NPD/IWRM Roadmap, previously developed in the NPD process, is constantly updated along with the development of the Strategy. Commenting on the presentation of Tajikistan, the Chair agreed on the difficulty to resolve the issue of property and that the water sector reform is a difficult and lengthy process. The Chair emphasized the importance of considering the impacts of climate change while developing water policies in Tajikistan.

22. Mr. Kurbangeldy Ballyev, representative of Turkmenistan in the Executive Committee of IFAS, presented the efforts to raise awareness and understanding on IWRM in Turkmenistan. Two years of work under the NPD umbrella improved the understanding by policymakers of the purpose and benefits of IWRM and of the NPD process. However, a lot still has to be done because implementation of IWRM requires changes in the entire legal system. The process of IWRM implementation requires a comprehensive approach and long-term investment of expertise and finances. According to the representative of Turkmenistan, NPDs should further develop into regional dialogues building on successes of the national processes.

23. The presentation by Mr. Volodya Narimanyan, Head, Water Resources Management Agency, Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia, focused on opportunities to reform economic instruments for water resources management in Armenia. Mr. Narimanyan stressed that limited financial resources are available for the water sector. Revenues collected from water tariffs cover only a part of the operation and maintenance costs for water services. For example, in 2011 the revenues collected from all existing economic instruments in Armenia covered only 17.1% of the total water management and water service costs. The pilot project in the Debed river basin, implemented by OECD, allowed formulating specific recommendations and initiated a strategic discussion on the development of a sound financing strategy (including new economic instruments).

24. The discussion focused on the achievements and challenges for implementation of IWRM in the countries of the region. Mr. Nassim Jawad, Food and Agriculture Organization in Tajikistan, stressed that the water reform in Tajikistan is part of a broader reform process in the country that covers agriculture, land and water management along with governance and institutions. This comprehensive approach makes it an excellent example in Central Asia. Mr. Jawad emphasized that the reform process takes time and requires political will and commitment. The Chair emphasized the interdependence of upstream and downstream countries in the use and management of transboundary waters and the need for continuous communication and dialogue.

25. Mr. Kurbangeldy Ballyev, representative of Turkmenistan in the Executive Committee of IFAS, informed the participants of the process of development of the Third Aral Sea Basin Programme (ASBP-3) by Central Asian governments and the Executive Committee of IFAS. The programme has been approved by all five countries and provides a solid framework for the promotion of IWRM in the Aral Sea Basin. Following the question by Azerbaijan on water agreements in Central Asia, several countries emphasized the role of the five-party 1992 Agreement on cooperation in joint management, use and protection of water resources of inter-State sources. Tajikistan emphasized the need for improving agreements and finding solutions for the management of water resources in Central Asia. Kazakhstan stressed the urgency of concluding a regional agreement on dam safety.

26. Ms. Sibylle Vermont, Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, expressed appreciation of the progress made and encouraged countries to speak out at international meetings in order to show this progress. Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Secretary to the UNECE Water Convention, informed that the draft work programme of the Water Convention for 2013-2015 includes the work under the

NPDs/IWRM. In addition, many issues highlighted during the discussion are to be addressed through other areas of the work programme such as adaptation to climate change, access to water and sanitation (Protocol on Water and Health), reconciliation of different water uses, etc. It is therefore expected that the NPDs will benefit from and also inform the work under other areas under the Convention.

27. The Chair invited participants to two lunchtime sessions. Donors and international organizations took part in the meeting of the Steering group of donors. Participants from EECCA countries discussed the draft framework for the preparation of the first benchmarking report on IWRM.

Topic 2. Adapting the water sector to climate change at national and transboundary levels

28. Mr. Xavier Leflaive, OECD, introduced the issue of water sector adaptation to climate change and presented the benefits of using economic instruments in adaptation to promote efficiency in water use, allocation and water pollution abatement, as well as low-cost adaptation options.

29. Mr. Alexandre Martoussevitch, OECD, and Ms. Sonja Koeppel, UNECE, reported on the experience of adaptation of the water sector to climate change in the Republic of Moldova. Mr. Martoussevitch described the impacts of climate change on quantity and quality of surface waters, as well as groundwater. In addition to a high uncertainty of the projections, challenges arise due to the lack of reliable data on water quality and the inadequate number of automatic hydro-posts. The activities in the NPD/WSS focus on WSS-specific “no regret” measures, such as (a) water and sanitation development/master plans based on the water resource inventory at the river basin level, (b) promoting efficient water use, and (c) upgrading existing WSS facilities. Adaptation strategy for WSS will be developed by the end of 2012. Ms. Koeppel described the project on reducing vulnerability to extreme floods and climate change in the Dniester basin with the participation of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The project is implemented by UNEP, UNECE and OSCE under the Environment and Security Initiative in 2010-2012 and is part of the Water Convention programme of pilot projects. In the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, climate change impact assessments had been done nationally, but with different methodologies and different results. The project developed the first basin-wide climate impact assessment and vulnerability assessment, as well as organized modeling and mapping of flood risks in selected areas.

30. Efforts to develop a national water strategy in Azerbaijan were presented by Mr. Rafiq Verdiyev, national expert, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. The development of a governmental strategy for water resources management based on the principles outlined in the EU WFD, UNECE Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health, is the major focus of the NPD/IWRM in Azerbaijan. The work of national experts is supported by international experts from Finland. The draft Strategy focuses on strengthening protection of water resources and aquatic ecosystems, sustainability and effectiveness in the use of water resources, meeting the needs of different water users, defining the goals of water resources management, institutional improvements and creation of the legal framework required for the implementation of the Strategy, as well as promotion of water saving and cost-recovery and improvement of transboundary cooperation. The Strategy provides for short (6 years), medium (12 years), and long-term (18 years) visions. Indicators are suggested for all major sections of the Strategy.

31. Ms. Tatiana Efimova, OECD, presented the OECD project on applying economic instruments for transboundary basin management in the Kura river basin in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The project assessed existing economic instruments and their performance in these countries against the water management objectives. The project identified water management issues

that are not addressed through the existing economic instruments. Potential new economic instruments for an improved water management were defined, including seasonal differentiation of tariffs, charges for non-consumptive water use (e.g. hydropower), introduction/reform of existing pollution fees. Ms. Efimova emphasized the need for a regional dialogue to explore potential transboundary benefits from improved water management, the role of economic incentives, and the institutional frameworks required.

Topic 3. Towards approximation of European and international water law instruments

32. Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE Regional Adviser on the Environment, introduced the topic by outlining the range of instruments which are at the core of the NPD work to improve legal frameworks for water sector reforms and transboundary water cooperation. These instruments include the EU WFD and its daughter directives, in particular on floods and on groundwater. Among the UN instruments, the UNECE Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health play an important role. The work also builds on the principles of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

33. Mr. Chyngyzbek Uzakbaev, Deputy Director, Department of Water Management and Melioration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic, described major developments and directions of the NPD process in Kyrgyzstan. He focused on the process of setting targets and target dates on water and health in Kyrgyzstan in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health. The Seventh meeting of the Steering Committee in April 2012 discussed the outcomes of the preliminary study of water and health in the Chu and Issyk-Kul basins. The study was organized in accordance with the Guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting, as well as the relevant experience of the Republic of Moldova. The Steering Committee approved nine priority areas for target setting according to Article 6(2) of the Protocol. Commenting on the presentation of Kyrgyzstan, Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Co-Secretary to the Protocol on Water and Health, highlighted the experience of the Republic of Moldova, a Party to the Protocol, which requested support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and UNECE in its target setting process. Following the approval of targets in 2010, the country is now implementing a second follow-up project to ensure implementation of targets set. The experience of the first project in setting targets in the Republic of Moldova has been of high relevance and represents a model for many other EECCA countries. It is expected that the second project will also provide valuable experience for other countries in the region.

34. Mr. George Dzamukashvili, National Water Partnership of Georgia, presented the development of water legislation in Georgia taking into account the EU WFD. Georgia is in the process of negotiating a new association agreement with the EU. Harmonization of legislation with EU standards is a key priority. The NPD helps to develop a new water law based on the conceptual frameworks laid down in the EU WFD and thematic regulatory frameworks of other EU directives on water. Mr. Dzamukashvili stressed that the draft concept of the Law on Water discussed by the recent meeting of the Steering Committee in June 2012 builds on IWRM principles and international obligations of Georgia and expressed hope for continuation of the work to improve water legislation in Georgia.

35. Mr. Viktor Dukhovniy, Scientific and Information Center of ICWC, introduced the issues of capacity building and human resources development for broader implementation of IWRM in Central Asia.

Session 3. Progress in implementing the EUWI EECCA component and Work plan for 2013

36. Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Chair, summarized the conclusions from the previous sessions (see Annex III). He stressed that the EECCA region is facing considerable environmental challenges concerning water. A policy response can benefit from existing European best practice models and techniques in the field of IWRM and WSS. The European Union and its Member States stand ready to further enhance their support to and cooperation with the EECCA region. Mr. Constantin concluded that sustainable development will not be achieved, if climate change is not properly addressed. Therefore the topics of water scarcity and efficient use of water should be added to the EUWI EECCA work programme. This is seen as a contribution to reduce systemic risks resulting from climate change before they trigger crises. He summarized that a key prerequisite to informed decision making and implementation of modern water management policies is a hydrological information system ensuring reliable, real-time data collection on river basins, which can be shared by all riparians and other stakeholders. Mr. Constantin highlighted the strong commitment of countries to implement activities under EUWI and expressed his thanks to the European Commission for its financial support of activities under the EECCA component of EUWI.

37. Mr. Nicola Di Pietrantonio, European Commission, addressed the coordination of regional activities under EUWI EECCA. He explained that the operations in the water sector in the EECCA region are growing in number and complexity, and the increasing amount of financial and technical resources allocated to the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy reflects the importance of this region for the EU. At the same time, better coordination among EU and non EU-funded initiatives in the region is necessary, which also implies a better definition of the activities implemented in the framework of each EU-funded project. Mr. Di Pietrantonio emphasized the role of EUWI as an umbrella initiative at national level. He informed the participants of the main on-going initiatives in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (such as Environmental Protection of International Rivers – EPIRB, Transboundary River Management for the Kura River – Phase III, Sector Budget Support in Ukraine and Moldova, and the project “Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)”) and called for coordination also at country level to avoid duplication of activities and inefficient use of resources. He also highlighted the challenges in data use and collection, as well as the need for cooperation in data collection and sharing. Mr. Di Pietrantonio informed participants that EUROSTAT in cooperation with the European Environment Agency would organize a seminar on water statistics for all EECCA partners from 11 to 13 September in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He also informed that the future of the EUWI beyond 2014 is currently under review by the European Commission, and continuation of the process would depend on the results achieved and on countries' demonstrated commitment.

38. In response to the questions from participants Mr. Di Pietrantonio explained that the EU supports partner countries to overcome constraints in data collection and use through technical assistance projects. Mr. Kurbangeldy Ballyev, representative of Turkmenistan in the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, drew attention to the information and data management projects in ASBP-3.

39. Mr. Muhtar Zhakenov, Committee of Water Resources under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, briefed the participants on the perspectives for NPD development in his country. A joint UNECE-OECD preparatory mission took place in May 2012 to explore possible topics for the NPD. Mr. Zhakenov emphasized the need for support to the basin councils. Kazakhstan is also interested to work on water and health and public-private partnerships in water supply and sanitation.

40. Ms. Iulia Trombitcaia, UNECE, reported on the outcomes of the lunchtime session which focused on the draft framework for the preparation of the first benchmarking report on IWRM implementation. Two benchmarking reports will be prepared (in 2012 and in 2015) by UNECE to assess progress and stimulate IWRM implementation. The framework for the preparation of the benchmarking report will be revised taking into account comments expressed during the lunchtime session. In particular, economic and financial aspects of IWRM will be strengthened, as well as indicators on public participation. Closer attention will be paid to terminology. Ms. Trombitcaia invited additional comments to the draft framework for benchmarking before 30 July 2012. A revised draft will be available for the second round of comments from 31 August to 15 September 2012. It is envisaged that national coordinators in consultation with national authorities and other stakeholders will fill in the benchmarking table between mid-September and mid-October 2012. The first draft of the benchmarking report should be available in November 2012 for consultations with the countries.

41. Mr. Xavier Leflaive, OECD, and Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE, presented the draft Indicative Workplan of the EUWI EECCA Working Group for 2012-2013. They underlined the horizontal activities aimed at coordination, communication and stakeholder involvement in EUWI NPDs, as well as country activities. Mr. Oleg Shevchenko, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, expressed the interest of his country to work on the Protocol on Water and Health, in particular on the implementation of targets set. Mr. Sahib Hasanzade, State Agency for Water Resources under the Ministry of Emergencies of Azerbaijan, expressed the interest in the work on the safety of water infrastructure and in a project to showcase the possible implementation of IWRM in Azerbaijan. Mr. George Dzamukashvili, National Water Partnership of Georgia, stressed the importance of working on public participation in water management. Mr. Bo Libert responded that the strategic partners will have a closer look at these proposals when planning further activities. The Working Group endorsed the Indicative Workplan (see Annex IV).

42. Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Chair, thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

Annex I

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Annex II

Agenda

European Union Water Initiative Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EUWI EECCA) Working Group 16th meeting (in the context of the National Policy Dialogues Core Group meeting)

Date: 02 July, 2012

Place: Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, **room XVI, building A, 5th floor**

Languages: English and Russian with simultaneous translation

Background and objectives

The EUWI EECCA is the regional component of the EU Water Initiative focused on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The EUWI EECCA Working Group is the body which monitors and steers the work of EUWI EECCA. The Working Group meets once a year, to review progress, set priorities, share the experience of target countries and information about relevant projects, and to endorse the work plan for the next year.

The EUWI EECCA supports work of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the implementation of objectives contained in the Action Plans and of the EU-Central Asia Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation which constitutes a framework for the implementation of the environment and water pillar of the EU Strategy for Central Asia.

The 16th meeting of the Working Group will bring together senior officials representing water and environmental authorities from countries of Western, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as international organisations, multilateral and bilateral donors. The organisation of the meeting is supported by the European Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Registration

Delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations are requested to complete the registration form available on the meeting web page (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=28679>) and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat not later than **15 June 2012** by e-mail (cammile.marcelo@unece.org). For participants requesting financial support this deadline is **22 May 2012**.

On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the UNECE website: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1606 and +41 22 917 1911.

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UNECE: Bo Libert (bo.libert@unece.org), Iulia Trombitcaia (iulia.trombitcaia@unece.org); registration: Cammile Marcelo (cammile.marcelo@unece.org).

The meeting will be chaired by Mr Gheorghe Constantin, Chair of the EUWI EECCA

02 July, 2012

09.30 – 10.00	<p>Introduction, objectives of the meeting and welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gheorghe Constantin, Chair of the EUWI EECCA and General Director of Water Department, Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forestry</i> • <i>Nicola Di Pietrantonio, European Commission</i> • <i>Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE</i> • <i>Xavier Leflaive, OECD</i> 	
10.00– 11.00	<p>Session 1: Tour de Table Countries will be asked to present information on 1-2 top priority issue(s) for water resource management in their own country regarding water management and economic development (4 min for each country)</p>	Oral reports
11.00 – 16.30	<p>Session 2. National Policy Dialogues in EECCA</p> <p>On-going NPDs in EECCA are clustered in four topics. Each topic is introduced by the OECD or UNECE. One or several countries present recent developments in this topic as a result of the NPD process. Other countries (EECCA or donor countries) share their own experience, raise questions, or express interest for similar work in the future.</p> <p>11.00 – 12.30</p> <p>Topic 1: Awareness and application of IWRM principles, including cost-recovery</p> <p>Introduction by UNECE and OECD</p> <p>Towards IWRM: the Water Sector Reform in Tajikistan, <i>Anvar Kamolidinov, Ministry of Melioration and Water Resources</i></p> <p>Raising awareness and understanding on IWRM in Turkmenistan, <i>Kurbangeldy Ballyev, Representative of Turkmenistan in the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea</i></p> <p>Opportunities to revise and reform economic instruments for water resources management in Armenia, <i>Volodya Narimanyan, Head, Water Resources Management Agency, Ministry of Nature Protection</i></p> <p>Q&A followed by discussion</p>	
12.30– 14.30	<p>Lunch break</p> <p>Two separate sessions are organized during lunch break:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steering group of donors (the group meets in another room; English only) - Discussion on IWRM benchmarking report (the group stays 	

	<p>in the same room; Russian only)</p> <p>Sandwiches and drinks provided</p>	
14.30 – 15.30	<p>Session 2 (continued) Topic 2: Adapting the water sector to climate change at national and transboundary levels</p> <p>Introduction by OECD</p> <p>Impacts of climate change on water resources in Moldova and possible adaptation measures. Efforts on transboundary cooperation in adaptation in the Dniester river basin, <i>Alexandre Martoussevitch, OECD and Sonja Koepfel, UNECE</i></p> <p>Developing a national water strategy in Azerbaijan in the context of climate change, <i>Rafiq Verdiyev, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</i></p> <p>Applying economic instruments for transboundary basin management: the case of Kura river, <i>Tatiana Efimova, OECD</i></p> <p>Q&A followed by discussion</p>	Oral reports
15.30-16.30	<p>Session 2 (continued) Topic 3: Towards approximation of the European and international water law instruments</p> <p>Introduction by UNECE</p> <p>Setting targets and target dates in Kyrgyzstan, <i>Chyngyzbek Uzakbaev, Deputy Director, Department of Water Management and Melioration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic</i></p> <p>Development of water legislation in Georgia taking into account the EU Water Framework Directive, <i>Mr. George Dzamukashvili, National Water Partnership of Georgia</i></p> <p>Q&A followed by discussion</p>	
16.30-17.30	<p>Session 3: Progress in implementing the EUWI EECCA component and Work plan for 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of regional activities under EUWI EECCA: main issues at stake, <i>Nicola Di Pietrantonio, European Commission</i> - Intervention on perspectives for the NPD development by Kazakhstan - Report back from the lunchtime session on benchmarking report, <i>Iulia Trombitcaia, UNECE</i> 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports on progress and proposals for the 2013 Work Plan of the EUWI EECCA WG - <i>Xavier Leflaive, OECD, and Bo Libert, UNECE</i> - Q&A - Endorsement of the 2013 Work Plan - Any other business 	
17.30	Closure of the meeting	

Annex III

Conclusions

of the European Union Water Initiative Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EUWI EECCA) Working Group 16th meeting

1. The participants welcomed the presentations made under the EUWI EECCA working group meeting. Addressing environmental challenges is key for sustainable socio-economic development and stability for the EECCA region. The European Union has put emphasis on environmental sustainability and efficient water management and will continue to share its experience and knowledge with the EECCA partners.
2. The European Union acknowledges the progress made within the framework of the EUWI EECCA and the positive role the promotion of the principles of the European Water Framework Directive has played. Fostering IWRM, a river basin approach and regional cooperation, including suitable measures to adapt to climate change, continue to be the focus in all related EU activities. The UNECE Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health provide important tools and frameworks for this work.
3. In this respect, the European Union, its Member States and other partner countries welcome the efforts and progress made by the EECCA countries through the EUWI National Policy Dialogues and will continue to pursue their policy of tailor-made responses to the individual needs. The latest progress report on the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia draws positive conclusions on the steps taken by the Central Asian partners concerning the introduction of national water policies.
4. The EECCA region is facing considerable environmental challenges concerning water. Its response can benefit from drawing on existing European best practice models and techniques in the field of IWRM and WSS. Notably, by introducing comprehensive river basin management plans and the relevant management structures, backed by appropriate economic and financing instruments, water quality and water efficiency have improved significantly in the European Union. In this regard, the European Union, its Member States and other partner countries stand ready to further enhance their cooperation with and their support to the EECCA region.
5. The participants agreed that sustainable development will not be achieved, if climate change is not properly addressed (from both mitigation and adaptation perspectives) and, as part of adequate climate action, it was decided to add the topics of water scarcity and efficient use of water to the EUWI EECCA work programme. This is seen as a contribution to reduce systemic risks resulting from climate change before they trigger crises. These activities will complement the existing efforts to promote adaptation of water sector to climate change and cooperation on adaptation to climate change in the transboundary basins.
6. The participants further concurred that a key prerequisite to informed decision making and implementation of sustainable, effective and cost-efficient water management policies is a hydrological information system ensuring reliable, real-time data collection on river basins, which can be shared by all riparian and other stakeholders. The European Union is committed to support its partners in their efforts, to put at their disposal all available EU experience, and to enhance donor coordination.

7. NPDs provide an effective platform for sharing of experience and cross-fertilization between the European Union, its Member States and other partner countries and the EECCA region. The participants further emphasized the role of NPDs in strengthening coordination of water and environmental activities implemented under EU projects and other relevant projects and initiatives in EECCA countries.

8. The European Union informed participants that EUROSTAT, in cooperation with EEA, would organise a seminar on water statistics for all EECCA partners from 11 to 13 September in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Indicative Workplan 2012-2013

EUWI EECCA National Policy Dialogues on IWRM and WSS

Horizontal and country activities	Areas of work IWRM (UNECE)	Areas of work on WSS and the financial and economic dimensions of WRM (OECD)
Coordination	<p style="text-align: center;">EUWI EECCA Working Group meeting 2013</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Stockholm World Water Week 2012 (side event)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Provision of coordination platform for water-related projects and activities during Steering Committee/Coordination Council meetings</p>	
Communication	<p>Meeting of the Parties to UNECE Water Convention (side event)</p> <p>NPD Update</p> <p>Press releases on SC meetings</p>	<p>Annual OECD/EAP Task Force meeting</p> <p>OECD/EAP Task Force E-alerts</p> <p>New website</p>
Stakeholder involvement	Strengthening communication and stakeholder involvement through stakeholder meetings	
Benchmarking	Benchmarking report on NPDs IWRM	
Armenia <i>Lead ministry/agency: Ministry of Nature Protection, State Agency of Water Resources Management</i>	Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health - preparation of an action plan and a governmental regulation	Strengthening economic and financial dimension of water resources management – study on adaption of the existing economic instruments and application of new ones to build stronger political support.
Azerbaijan <i>Lead ministry/agency: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, State Water Resources Agency</i>	<p>Finalization of the National Water Strategy</p> <p>Development of bilateral water agreement with Georgia</p> <p>Development of an implementation plan for the National Water Strategy (tentative)</p>	<p>Exploring potential costs and benefits from improved transboundary water management</p> <p>Organisation of a regional conference on implementation of economic principles of the EU Water Framework Directive and Integrated Water Resources Management in Azerbaijan</p>
Georgia <i>Lead ministry/agency:</i>	Finalisation of the concept for new water legislation taking into account EU WFD	Assistance in developing a sound tariff policy for the water supply and sanitation sector and streamlining the

<i>Ministry of Environment Protection</i>	<p>National water IWRM strategy (tentative)</p> <p>Development of bilateral agreement with Azerbaijan</p> <p>Accession to the UNECE Water Convention</p> <p>Setting targets for the UNECE/WHO-Europe Protocol on Water and Health</p>	sector reform
Kazakhstan	Agreement on areas of work for the NPD reached, Steering group established and implementation starts	
Kyrgyzstan <i>Lead ministry/agency: Department of Water Management and Land Reclamation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation</i>	<p>Application of river basin management approach through development of the river basin management plan for the Chu River</p> <p>Application of the principles of the Protocol on Water and Health: setting targets</p> <p>Preparation of policy brief</p>	<p>Improving the Use of Economic Instruments for Water Resources Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations for Chu basin; - Action plan for Issyk-Kul basin.
Republic of Moldova <i>Lead ministry/agency: Ministry of Environment</i>	<p>Support to the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health through the work to achieve established targets</p> <p>Transboundary climate change adaptation strategy for the Dniester basin</p>	<p>Adaptation strategy for WSS</p> <p>National conference to present the adaptation strategy for WSS and viable business models for sanitation in small towns and rural settlements</p>
Russian Federation	Support to water management sector reform - National Conference	
		Inventory of economic instruments for water resources management in one selected basin (e.g. Baikal basin)
Tajikistan <i>Lead ministry/agency: Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Resources</i>	<p>Water Sector Reform through the work on the legal and institutional frameworks based on IWRM principles</p> <p>Strengthening transboundary cooperation with Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan</p>	Work on sustainable financing of the water sector in Tajikistan through development of a sound tariff policy (water for agriculture and/or water supply and sanitation)

<p>Turkmenistan <i>Lead ministry/agency: Ministry of Water Economy</i></p>	<p>Support to the understanding and application of the principles of the UNECE Water Convention as part of the accession process</p> <p>Incorporation of IWRM principles in the national legislation and awareness on IWRM</p> <p>Analyses and development of transboundary water cooperation</p> <p>Support to accession to other environmental instruments (tentative)</p>	
<p>Ukraine <i>Lead ministry/agency: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Housing Municipal Economy</i></p>	<p>Transboundary climate change adaptation strategy for the Dniester basin</p> <p>Equitable access to water (tentative)</p>	<p>Economic and fiscal incentives to promote inter-municipal cooperation for WSS</p> <p>Development of a sustainable business model for one river basin council.</p>