



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EXTERNAL RELATIONS DIRECTORATE GENERAL

DIRECTORATE Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus, Central Asian
Republics.
Central Asia

Brussels, 13 July 2010

Minutes of the meeting

Subject: EU Water Initiative - Eastern Europe Caucasus and Central Asia Coordination
Meeting: Meeting with -

Objective of the meeting was:

- To assess status, progress and prospects of EU WI EECCA;
- To start organisation of the EUWI EECCA Working Group meeting, planned 27/28 October 2010.

Participants:

From EECCA Working Group - Romanian EUWI Chair Mr. Constantin and Mrs. Roll UNECE and Mr. Borkey and Mr. Leflaive /OECD team leaders

From European Commission and European Council: Pierre Borgoltz, André Liebaert, Delphine Marié, Jenniver Sehring, Xavier Derrey, Maria Barbara Chojnacka, Galia Agisheva.

The following points were brought up during the meeting:

1. Status and prospects of EUWI in EECCA region.

The EUWI EECCA component appears as one of the most successful components of the EU Water Initiative. The EECCA National Water Policy Dialogues launched on the Water Supply and Sanitation, and Integrated Water Resources management are proving very good policy reforms and implementation tools in the countries which have adopted first the EUWI approach. In fact the NPDs are entering an active implementation of reforms adopted in a first phase while at the same time keeping a central role in formulation and improvement of national water policies. The NPDs are, in particular for the Eastern Neighbourhood countries, currently actively engaging in the deepening of the harmonisation process for EU environmental and water regulations. The NPDs help in the effective realisation of the ENP Action Plans in the sector. For instance helping Moldova to adopt the EU Urban sewage directive, or in Ukraine the Water Framework sub Directive on flooding.

In Central Asia **Kyrgyzstan** has so far been the only country that started the NPD, which focused on the setting up of a River Basin Council for the Chu basin and on adopting an action plan to achieve sustainable water management, safe drinking water supply and

adequate sanitation. OECD and UNECE plan to complete policy dialogues focused on sustainable use of water resource, the protection of water ecosystem and water-and-health issues (UNECE Water and Health protocol). This includes transboundary issues in the Chu and Talas River basin, where for the first time; Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been talking about elaborating a “River Basin Plan” – EU model.

In all countries the gradual adoption and then implementation of the UNECE related Conventions is a well accepted and worked on objective in all NPDs. For details, see UNECE/OECD Report dated 1 July 2010. All these countries are moving forward on water policies and requested further support by EUWI

Considering the positive response to the approach of the NPDs, it is clear that the EC support initially planned for three years for the NPDs was insufficient, as the NPDs are in fact developing effectively in two successive phases: firstly to elaborate the strategic and legal framework for adaptation of the EU Water Framework Directive principles, and UNECE Conventions, and then secondly embarking on a second phase for actual implementation of new reforms through proper planning, budgeting , mobilisation of financial and human resources and realisation of the infrastructure required .

As a conclusion, it is now important to reconsider EU support to the EUWI EECCA for 2011-2014. This in order to ensure continuity of the process towards complete realisation of water reforms and harmonisation with EU underway in the first beneficiaries wave, as well as to provide the required assistance over time for those which are just starting (or about to start) the NPD process.

A case in point was raised about Kazakhstan which has been asking for the launch of NPDs WSS and IWR, but was turned down for lack of resources. It would be indeed important, given the role played by Kazakhstan in Central Asia context – political engagement on EU environmental acquis and regionally as EC- IFAS Secretariat – for this request to be positively followed up.

UNECE and OECD mentioned that benefit from transboundary cooperation have been so far been limited because progress on a more harmonised approached is needed, that would enable better coordination of national and transboundary level. (transboundary cooperation is often about taking the burden together) . It is only now that this issue can be dealt with concretely- for instance Georgia and Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova-

OECD remarked that whatever happens in NPD articulates the funds are allocated, and in particular the financial means provided by IFIs, such as through NIF and IFCA - thus providing an additional incentive for action by the partners involved.

2. EU Water Initiative EECCA Working Group meeting: 27/28 Oct. 2010 Draft Agenda

The Romanian Chair, as well as OECD/UNECE insisted for the joint participation of all EECCA countries representatives in the meeting. This is essential for the momentum of

the reforms and fruitful cross fertilisation of practices and implementation of reform experiences which has proven crucial.

A first draft agenda for the meeting was circulated. The OECD and UNECE welcomed the first draft agenda (attached), stressing that there should be a substantive exchange of information and experience from Member States (foreseen for part one).

It was agreed that EUWI Chair, OECD/UNECE would provide revised draft to be finalised with Commission services by end July 2010. Romanian Chair will then issue invitation letters to counterparts.

It was also agreed that the issue of climate change and water will be dealt within the frame of the EUWI EECCA Working group- It is planned that the Central Asia participants of the first day (Climate Change working group) will be invited to participate during the second day.

The Working Group meetings should bring on the table progress and illustration from the countries themselves, as well as draw from EUMS 'experience on executing the Water Framework directive and related regulations. Moreover the meetings should bring to the fore how elements of policies and directives have been integrated and contributed to a good way forward. An additional aim is also to elaborate what is needed in the future.

An important question concerns the integration of water management (water shortage). Experience from EU countries should be shared and well illustrated.