

Update on National Policy Dialogues in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia



Dear friends,

I am happy to present to you the fifth Update on the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) National Policy Dialogues (NPDs), implemented in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).

The second half of 2012 has been marked with a number of important events. On 2 July 2012, the EUWI EECCA Working Group met in Geneva, Switzerland, to assess the progress made and approve a workplan for the future. Steering Committee meetings in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan took place in early autumn 2012. An Intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the NPD in Kazakhstan made steps towards launching the NPD in this country.

The sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) takes place in the end of November in Rome. The Meeting of the Parties is expected to adopt the new work programme for 2013-2015 with the EUWI NPDs as one of the future areas of work.

The Meeting of the Parties will also welcome a new

country to the Convention's family – Turkmenistan, which acceded to the Water Convention in August 2012, following the discussions and recommendations developed under the NPD on IWRM. I hope that this important achievement will inspire us for further progress in implementing the NPDs across the region.

In this year, 2012, we have celebrated 10 years from launching EUWI during the World Summit on Sustainable Development. We can be proud by its achievements recorded in the EECCA region. Key to achieving success in the region is the result of the commitment of countries as well as of the involvement of the UNECE and OECD as strategic partners.

We want to thank you all for the active involvement and to look forward for an extended cooperation in the 2013

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Chairman of the EUWI EECCA Working Group
Director, Ministry of Environment and Forests,
ROMANIA

This is interesting

- EUWI EECCA Working Group reviewed the progress made and approved 2012-2013 work plan
- Ukraine launches a pilot project on financing of basin organizations
- Project on the use of economic instruments for lake Baikal basin to be launched in Russia

About National Water Policy Dialogues

NPDs are the main operational instrument of the EECCA component of the EU Water Initiative. The EUWI, including its EECCA Component, was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. It contributes to the implementation of water-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It is through the successful implementation of NPDs that the vision of the EUWI will materialize, key objectives will be attained and policies and institutions will be reformed.

The objective of each NPD is to facilitate the reform of water policies (covering both water supply and sanitation, and integrated water resources management) in a particular country/region. Each NPD involves high level representatives of all key partners, including national and basin authorities, representatives of relevant international organizations, expert community, civil society (NGOs) and the private sector.

The OECD and UNECE act as strategic partners of the EUWI in EECCA. The OECD specializes in the economic and financial dimension of water policies, and UNECE focuses on legal and institutional reforms for IWRM.

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NPD PROFILE: Azerbaijan. By Mutallim Abdulhasanov and Rafiq Verdiyev

Some history

The official request for initiation of the NPD on IWRM in Azerbaijan was submitted on 15 January 2010 with the letter sent by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) of Azerbaijan Republic to UNECE.

The NPD on IWRM in Azerbaijan started in April 2010 with the first mission of UNECE representatives to Azerbaijan. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed and a NPD IWRM Steering Committee was established in September 2010. The first meeting of the Steering Committee took place on 12 October 2010; the second – on 8 June 2012. The next meeting is planned for February 2013. This meeting of the Steering Committee will be led by OECD and mainly focus on economic aspects of water management. Apart from the Steering Committee meetings, meetings of the working group took place on 16-17 June 2011 and 29 November 2011, and also a stakeholder meeting was organized on 7 June 2012.

Cooperation under NPD

NPD in Azerbaijan Republic is a platform for elaboration and implementation of policy packages on IWRM that aim to achieve the following goals:

- Sustainable use of water resources taking into account climate change;
- Achieving safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation;
- Protection of water ecosystems;
- Prevention, surveillance and decrease of water related diseases.

These specific goals will be achieved through the following activities:

- Elaboration of the Water Strategy based on IWRM principles, including provisions of the European Union Water Framework Directive and UNECE Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health as well as other international documents of EU and other international organizations;
- Development of an action plan for strategy implementation;
- Establishment of an institutional framework for Water Strategy implementation;
- Harmonization of water legislation;
- Development and implementation of specific thematic projects, including projects on biomonitoring;
- Development and implementation of a pilot project aimed at introduction of the river basin management principle.

The Steering Committee discussed at its first meeting the preparation of the National Strategy of Azerbaijan Republic for water resources management (further “Water Strategy”) and the main content of the strategy was discussed in the end of 2011. The overall goal of the strategy is enhancing and promotion of national efforts towards efficient, equitable and optimal use of available water resources of Azerbaijan as a basis for stable and sustainable socio-economic development.

The main areas of work within the strategy are improvement of institutional structures and capacity building, support to transboundary water cooperation, promotion of water saving and cost-recovery, development of multi-purpose integrated use of artificial water bodies and irrigational infrastructure, development of water monitoring and information systems, improvement of legislation, targets for surface and ground water status, ensuring drinking water quality, climate change and flood risk management.

The second meeting of the Steering Committee decided to submit the Water Strategy to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval in the end of 2012.

Plans for the implementation of the Water Strategy

An effective and transparent implementation of the Water Strategy is crucial for water resources conservation in the future. Such implementation should be based on participation of all parties taking into account current and future water-use and protection of ecosystems.

Azerbaijan’s Water Strategy includes a number of actions that have already been undertaken or planned for addressing specific issues in different areas of water policy. Implementation has begun and will continue to be a priority. A procedure of integration and coordination of the strategy includes development of integrated water planning and management systems, review and consolidation of water legislation, as well as development of mechanisms for financing of management and planning. A step-by-step approach to strategy implementation will be the basis for water policy in the future.

The Steering Committee will regularly meet to prepare and review an Action Plan. This plan will be prepared by the working group in collaboration with all organizations in water sector. The objective of the plan will be achieving goals and short, medium and long term actions identified in the strategy. The plan will show how the future activities carried out in Azerbaijan will correspond to the local situation and will propose a number of priorities in addressing local needs.



*Maiden Tower
Baku, Azerbaijan*

Implementation of the Water Strategy in Azerbaijan has begun and will continue to be a priority



As the strategy aims to provide a consistent framework for water resources management in Azerbaijan, a target-based approach will be used for its implementation. Economic aspects will play an important role in determining correct decisions and implementation activities indicated in the strategy.

Good examples of the work already carried out but still included under the legal and institutional part of the strategy include the establishment of the State Water Agency under the Ministry of Emergency Situations by the Decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic in February 2011, development of surface water quality standards within a relevant national committee managed by the MENR and the State Committee on Standards, development of pilot river basin management plans, etc.

An important direction of the strategy is the modernization of the water supply and sanitation system. In the course of the past years, the government of Azerbaijan, both through budgetary and international financing, implements large scale projects on reconstruction of water supply and sanitation system, and installation of new water pipelines.

Transboundary cooperation with Georgia

It should be noted that the strategy attaches great attention to transboundary cooperation. With the support of UNECE and OSCE as part of "Environment and Security" Initiative, a draft bilateral agreement on the use of shared water resources of the Kura River Basin has been prepared.

On 28 November 2011 representatives of the governments of Azerbaijan and Georgia met in Baku in order to discuss the draft agreement. Approval of the final draft of the agreement by the governments of the two countries is expected in the near future.

The draft agreement provides a framework for cooperation between two countries on water pollution prevention and water quality control, biodiversity conservation, emergency situations, data and information exchange, as well as public participation. The draft agreement also envisages the establishment of a joint commission on the protection and rational use of water resources of the Kura river.

Signing of the bilateral agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia on the use of shared water resources of Kura river will contribute to implementation of the UNECE Water Convention

EU Water Initiative NPD activities in EECCA in July – mid-November 2012

16th meeting of the EUWI EECCA Working Group

2 July 2012 – Geneva, Switzerland -

The 16th meeting of the EUWI EECCA Working Group took place 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 organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors. It reviewed progress in the implementation of NPDs with a focus on such thematic areas as awareness and application of IWRM principles, including cost-recovery; adapting the water sector to climate change at the national and transboundary levels; and approximation of European and international water law instruments. In addition to addressing the progress achieved and lessons learned, the Working Group discussed and approved the indicative workplan for 2012-

2013, including the launch of a new policy dialogue in Kazakhstan and an increased focus on stakeholder involvement in the dialogue activities.

Capacity-building event on monitoring and financial management capacity of water institutions took place in Ukraine

11-12 July 2012 – Kiev, Ukraine- In the framework of the National Policy Dialogue a capacity building event on "Strengthening monitoring and financial management capacity of water institutions in Ukraine" was organized. The newly established National Regulator of Public Utilities in Ukraine requested the OECD to share experience with water pricing, affordability and social protection measures, and benchmarking of water utilities (IBNET, OFWAT). The workshop was hosted by the National Regulator of Ukraine. The Finnish Government provided financial support.

NPD in Ukraine explores how to finance basin organizations

In July 2012, a pilot study on strengthening the economic and financial dimensions of river basin organizations was launched in Ukraine. The project will review international experience on financing institutions for water resources management and explore ways to finance river basin councils in the Ukrainian context by strengthening use of economic instruments (and raise additional revenues). The OECD will share the results of the study with other EECCA countries.

Meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health under the NPD on IWRM in Kyrgyzstan

13 September 2012 – Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan – The meeting of the Working Group discussed the specifics of target setting in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health in Kyrgyzstan, the target areas of the Protocol on



Issyk-Kul lake, Kyrgyzstan

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Water and Health in relation to the country needs and the role of NGOs in addressing water and health issues. The project document “Targets, target dates and priority measures in the Kyrgyz Republic in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health” was discussed and submitted for review to the Steering Committee.

Intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the National Water Policy Dialogue in the Republic of Kazakhstan

14 September 2012 – Astana, Kazakhstan - In 2010 Kazakhstan requested UNECE and the European Commission to initiate an NPD on IWRM. This is now made possible by the new grant from the European Commission for 2012-2015 that includes Kazakhstan in the list of participating countries both for IWRM and water supply and sanitation issues. The Intergovernmental preparatory meeting was organized by the Committee of Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, UNECE and OECD. The purpose of the meeting was to prioritize the topics for the NPD in the country on the basis of a list proposed during bilateral consultations with ministries and agencies in May 2012. An additional objective was to agree on the composition of the NPD Steering Committee. The meeting prioritized such topics as a benefit analysis for Kazakhstan’s accession to the Protocol on Water and Health, sustainable business models for WSS in rural areas and small towns, and private sector participation in WSS. Opportunities for addressing transboundary cooperation issues and IWRM governance may also be explored during the NPD process.

Meetings in Russia to launch a pilot project on the use of economic instruments for water resources management, with focus on Lake Baikal basin

13-15 September 2012 – Ulan-

Ude, Republic of Buryatia, Russia - OECD EAP Task Force used the opportunity of the participation in the 2012 Baikal Economic Forum to present its new pilot project on the use of economic instruments for water resources management in Russia and meet key local stakeholders (the Ministries of Natural Resources, Economy, Construction and Utility Services) and international partners (UNDP and GEF – sponsored Baikal project) to agree that a sub-basin of the Lake Baikal basin will be used as a pilot basin for this project, as well as to discuss a possible follow-up project in the basin. The interest of local stakeholders in launching a policy dialogue on water policy in the region/basin was expressed in an official letter sent by the Ministry of Natural Resources of Buryatia to the OECD.

Annual meeting of the EAP Task Force

24-25 September 2012 – Oslo, Norway – The Annual Meeting of the EAP Task Force was hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment. The meeting took place just a few months after the Rio+20 Summit and presented an opportunity to discuss how green growth strategies could be operationalized by countries of EECCA, particularly within the framework of the EAP Task Force work programme. More specifically, participants were invited to consider ways of strengthening market-based approaches for environmental protection, in particular for water management, in EECCA, as well as challenges related to innovation and technology cooperation in support to green growth. Background papers and meeting documentation are available [here](#).

Progress towards the implementation of IWRM in Turkmenistan

27 September 2012 – Ashgabat, Turkmenistan - The second meeting of the Steering Committee of the NPD on IWRM committed

to further progress towards the implementation of IWRM in Turkmenistan following the country’s accession to the UNECE Water Convention in August 2012.

The Steering Committee requested the NPD inter-ministerial expert group to develop proposals for strengthening national legislation in line with IWRM principles and to review the opportunities for river basin management in the country.

The Steering Committee also specified capacity building activities that would be instrumental for the advancement of IWRM in Turkmenistan, in particular the development of a training course on IWRM for subsequent use of materials by the ministries and agencies of Turkmenistan. It also recommended that the inter-ministerial expert group discuss whether the accession to the Espoo and Industrial Accidents Conventions would be in the national interest of Turkmenistan.

Stakeholder meeting and the eighth Steering Committee meeting in Kyrgyzstan

23-24 October 2012 – Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan – The Stakeholder Meeting and the Eighth meeting of the Steering Committee were organized by the Department of Water Management and Melioration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with the UNECE and the OECD.

The Stakeholder Meeting on 23 October focused on: (a) target setting under the Protocol on Water and Health, (b) transboundary water cooperation of Kyrgyzstan, (c) economic instruments for water resources management, and (d) adaptation of water resources to climate change.

A representative of Uzbekistan took part in the stakeholder meeting to learn about the experience of Kyrgyzstan in conducting the national policy dialogue. The Steering Committee on 24 October discussed the report



Intergovernmental meeting in Kazakhstan

“Setting targets in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health in Kyrgyzstan” and decided to submit it for review to relevant ministries, agencies and local authorities. The Steering Committee also discussed the work done on economic and financial aspects of the water policy in Kyrgyzstan, including economic instruments for the management of water resources and water infrastructure. It requested OECD, upon completion of the ongoing work on subsidies impacting the water sector in Kyrgyzstan, to prepare a short note for policy-makers prioritizing the recommendations on improving the use of economic instruments for water resources management, including proposed reform of subsidies.

The Steering Committee also defined the priority areas for the NPD in 2013, including support for implementation of basin management in Kyrgyzstan (basin management plans, basin councils and development of basin management for the Chu River Basin), support for the continuation of work on the targets on water and health in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health (implementation and monitoring of the targets), review of subsidies which impact on the state of water resources, water infrastructure and water management, as well as preparing an Action plan for the implementation of recommendations for improving the use of economic

instruments for water resources management.

Representatives of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan took part in the Steering Committee meeting and shared their experiences in conducting the National Policy Dialogues in those countries.

The fourth Working group meeting in Tajikistan

9 November 2012 – Dushanbe, Tajikistan – A meeting of the NPD IWRM Working Group was organized by the Tajik Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Resources in Dushanbe on 9 November 2012 in cooperation with UNECE and the EU. Fifteen representatives of relevant ministries, state enterprises and other government structures met to discuss the latest version of the Water Sector Reform Strategy. Inputs to the final version of the Strategy were agreed upon.

The context of the Water Sector Reform Process was further analyzed and the improvement of coordination mechanisms was discussed, resulting in a recommendation to the NPD Steering Committee. The application of IWRM in the Tajik context was discussed. International consultants from the EU and the UNECE, which are providing technical assistance to the process, also participated in the meeting.

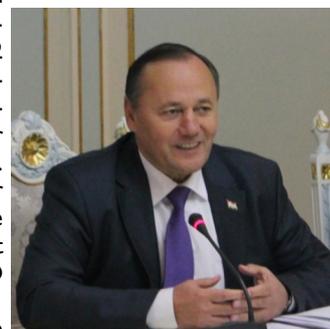
The fourth Steering Committee meeting in Tajikistan

15 November 2012 – Dushanbe, Tajikistan - The fourth meeting of

the Steering Committee of the NPD in Tajikistan was organized by the Tajik Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Resources on 15 November 2012 in Dushanbe. This meeting represented the final step in the development of the Water Sector Reform Strategy in Tajikistan. The latest version of the Water Sector Reform Strategy will be submitted to the government after a final review by NPD IWRM Working Group.

Participants also discussed the situation of hydropower in Tajikistan and received updates about the various initiatives in the water sector. A project on setting targets under the Protocol on Water and Health was discussed. Following the approval of the Strategy it will be necessary to revise water law and the terms of reference of a working group on water legislation was discussed. The launching of new initiatives on financial issues was also presented and discussed with the involvement of the OECD.

More than seventy representatives of national authorities, international organizations and other development partners and stakeholders took part in the meeting. Representatives of the NPDs of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were also present to share their experience.



*Mr. Rahmat Bobokalonov
Minister of Land Reclamation and
Water Resources of Tajikistan,
NPD Chairman*

NPD made it possible to create a general framework of the water sector reformation programme in Tajikistan



Representatives of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan at the fourth Steering Committee meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (15 November 2012)

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Water Statistics for EECCA countries

Development of comparable indicators is essential for efficient water statistics in EECCA

Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency organized on 11-13 September 2012 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, a seminar on water statistics in EECCA. Representatives of National Statistical Institutes and national water authorities in these regions participated in the meeting that focused on the exchange of good practice in the provision of statistics for water management and governance of the water sector. Participants discussed practical techniques and challenges in producing statistical data and indicators as well as facilitating data flows on issues such as Water resources, Water abstraction and use, Water exploitation index, and Wastewater collection and treatment. It is evident that reliable, complete and timely statistics are essential tools for the planning of sustainable water supply, consumption and treatment, and most of participating countries do have data sets and data bases that can be used. While the indicators “Water abstraction” and “Water use” are to a large extent “ready” to use in regional context for assessment, other indicators need to be better developed in many countries to become comparable. The agreement on specific indicators in the UNECE region is a good basis for this work. The sharing of data and information with international organizations (such as EEA, Eurostat, UNECE, FAO etc.), as well as between countries still remain to be improved. Steps in the right direction are promoted by the Joint UNECE Task Force on Environmental Indicators, which in the last three years have been developing water indicators, e.g. renewable freshwater resources, freshwater abstraction, household water use per capita, water losses, reuse and recycling of freshwater, water quality, etc. The data provided by countries clearly showed the progress made by the Joint Task Force in improving the environmental data collection and reporting in this area in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

The seven principles of the “Shared Environmental Information System” (SEIS) proposed by the European Commission were highlighted during the seminar. According to SEIS, environmental information should be:

1. Managed as close as possible to its source.
2. Collected once, and shared with others for many purposes.
3. Readily available to easily fulfill reporting obligations.
4. Easily accessible to all users.
5. Accessible to enable comparisons at the appropriate geographical scale, and citizen participation.
6. Fully available to the general public, and at the national level in the relevant national language(s).
7. Supported through common, free open software standards.

The EUWI National Policy Dialogues were presented at the seminar and the possibility to develop work on water data, statistics and information in this framework was discussed. It was proposed to consider sharing experience and best practices on water information and statistics in the framework of the NPDs.



Confluence of Kura and Aragvi rivers in Mtskheta, Georgia



Meetings and events until the end of 2012 and in the beginning of 2013 (the schedule is tentative, meeting dates may change)

November 2012 – January 2013	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	Six meetings of the NPD inter-ministerial expert group (in 2012: 17 November, 24 November, 8 December, 22 December; in 2013: 5 January and 19 January)
21 November 2012	Chisinau, Republic of Moldova	The third EUWI National Policy Dialogue meeting, including a conference on draft adaptation strategy for water supply and sanitation and the first Steering Committee meeting and the official launch of the project: “Implementation of targets under the Protocol On Water and Health in Moldova”
29 November 2012	Rome, Italy	Side-event on EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues during the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention
6 December 2012	Moscow, Russian Federation	OECD workshop on economic instruments for water resources management in Russia
10 December 2012	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	Expert workshop on subsidies which impact on the state of water resources
12 December 2012	Yerevan, Armenia	The ninth NPD Steering Committee meeting
17-18 December 2012	Moscow, Russian Federation	Consultations on international conference in 2013 on water policy reform
January 2013	Kiev, Ukraine	The first joint Steering Group meeting comprising officials for both IWRRM and WSS
January 2013	Tbilisi, Georgia	Meeting of the extended Working group on the development of national water legislation
Early 2013	Astana, Kazakhstan	The first NPD Steering Committee
February 2013	Baku, Azerbaijan	The third NPD Steering Committee meeting
First quarter of 2013	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	The ninth NPD Steering Committee

Dear colleagues, we would be happy to include your contributions in the next issues of this newsletter. Please send your contribution, up to 300 words, in English and/or Russian by 01/04/2013 to 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



Stakeholders meeting in Kyrgyzstan (23 October 2012)

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Publications and reports

On 4 July 2012 after the 16th meeting of the EUWI EECCA Working Group, Iulia Trombitcaia, UNECE, told UN Radio how the EUWI National Policy Dialogues help in implementation of water policy in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. You can listen to the interview in Russian at

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/russian/archives/116648/>

Publications related to the NPD process are available at Publications page

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

Documents and presentations are available under the links to respective countries at

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

All OECD publications are available at

<http://www.oecd.org/water>

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