



### Water Convention

## UNECE Water Convention holds global workshop for river basin commissions



A workshop about river basin commissions and other joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation, focusing on legal and institutional issues, opened on 23 September in Geneva under the auspices of UNECE's Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). The two-day workshop aims to identify good practices in the legal and institutional arrangements, procedures and working methods of joint bodies.



The workshop brings together over 120 participants representing governments, river basin organizations, experts and academia with hands-on experience of participation in joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation, as well as those working on the establishment of new agreements and institutions.



Discussions aimed to identify good practices in the procedures and working methods of joint institutions. For example, the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, a winner of the European Riverprize 2013, is expected to present the evolution and gradual expansion of cooperation in the Rhine Basin. The International Commission for the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin will describe its path from a navigation-dominated body towards an integrated water resources management commission. The binational Authority of Lake Titicaca will share its experience of implementing the Master Plan to address the use of resources in the Lake Titicaca, Desaguadero River, Lake Poopo and Coipasa Salt Lake. The Mekong River Commission will share its experience with organizational reforms.



The debate also aimed to highlight recent successes and ongoing efforts to establish new agreements and joint bodies, such as the emerging Afghan-Tajik cooperation on hydrology and environment in the upper Amu Darya Basin, with a view to identifying challenges and guiding such efforts in the basins and aquifers not covered by agreements and joint institutions.

Over 90 per cent of the world's population lives in countries that share transboundary river and lake basins. Yet, many of these transboundary waters are not covered by agreements of the riparian States and do not have joint institutional structures in charge of their management and cooperation. Notably, two thirds of the world's 277 international river basins, plus transboundary aquifer systems, lack any type of cooperative management framework.

The discussions at the workshop, organized in the International Year of Water Cooperation, support the ongoing debate on the importance of proper legal and institutional arrangements for water resources management in all transboundary basins and the need for the inclusion of good governance of water resources in the future sustainable development goals under the post-2015 development agenda.

A second workshop tentatively planned for April 2014 will focus on specific areas and technical aspects of cooperation in the framework of joint bodies, such as cooperation on preservation and restoration of ecosystems, water infrastructure, contingency planning, navigation, fisheries, etc. □

For more information, see: [http://www.unece.org/env/water/workshop\\_joint\\_bodies\\_2013.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/workshop_joint_bodies_2013.html)  
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### Ageing

## UNECE will launch Policy Brief on Abuse of Older Persons on the International Day of Older Persons



Every year, 1 October marks the International Day of Older Persons. In the UNECE region, 14% of the population or 175 million people are aged 65 years and above. As the number of older people increases – it is expected to reach 20 % or 249 million people in 2030 – so do concerns about abuse and neglect. Following the urge from the UNECE Working Group on Ageing, the latest issue of the Policy Brief series is dedicated to the issue of Abuse of Older Persons.

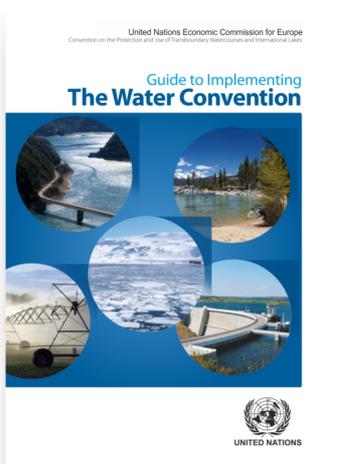
In the European region, around 4 million people are estimated to experience some form of maltreatment every year, according to WHO. This can take different forms, such as physical, psychological, sexual and financial abuse or neglect. Due to the stigma attached to it, abuse may be underreported by as much as 80 %, according to WHO. Therefore, efforts have to be directed to enhancing data collection to gain a better understanding of the dimension of the issue and to increase the evidence base for further research.

Since negative attitudes towards ageing and older people are often at the root of abusive situations, the Policy Brief suggests raising public awareness through media or poster campaigns. The promotion of meaningful interaction between older adults and young people can be a stepping stone to the diffusion of more positive attitudes towards old age. Support services may help to mitigate risk factors that are located with older people who live alone or depend on an abusive family member or with an abuser who is overburdened with the care responsibilities. Training can help both formal and informal carers to manage stress and to recognize and avoid abusive situations. Minimum standards should be established for institutional care, accompanied by regular screening and monitoring. Helplines have proven useful in providing counselling. Case managers can assess the needs of older people faced with abuse; they establish a care plan and may refer the person to other medical or psychological services. Multiagency teams ensure interagency coordination.

Overall, the Policy Brief on Ageing series aims to provide UNECE member States with the necessary know-how to implement the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS), reconfirmed in the 2012 Vienna Ministerial Declaration. □

The Policy Brief is available at: [http://www.unece.org/pau/age/policy\\_briefs/welcome.html](http://www.unece.org/pau/age/policy_briefs/welcome.html).

## Off the Press



## Guide to Implementing the Water Convention

The process of implementation — or translating intent into action — is fundamental to effective public policy. However, according to studies, countries' failures to fully implement international commitments are often unintentional. Also, the differences across countries and the unevenness of their institutional and economic capacities may lead to unbalanced implementation of international agreements. These challenges to implementation can often be overcome simply by enhancing dialogue and cooperation within the international community as well as with other States Parties.

This **Guide to Implementing the Water Convention** (the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes) includes a detailed explanation of selected provisions of the Convention, including those that may cause potential misunderstandings and difficulties in interpretation. For such provisions, the Guide provides the background, sets out the minimum implementation requirements and gives examples from the UNECE region to illustrate their application.

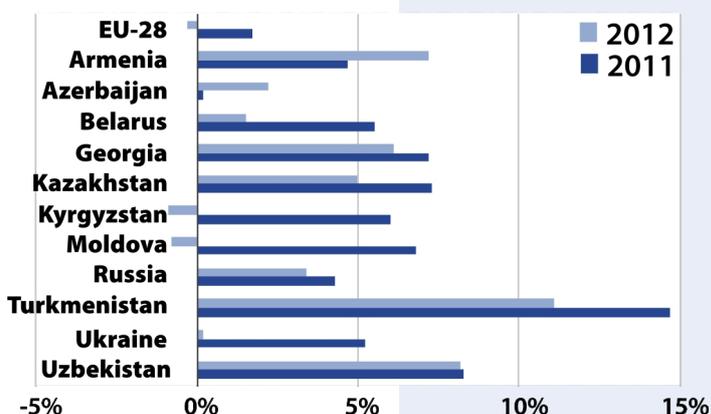
With its global opening to accession by all United Nations Members States, the Water Convention enters a crucial stage of development. It will offer a global intergovernmental platform for exchange and debate on transboundary water issues and for supporting the implementation of international water law. Parties to the Convention will be able to share the knowledge, practices and experience collected in the 20 years since the adoption of the Convention, and, at the same time, to benefit from the knowledge, practices and experience in other regions of the world.

The opening of the Water Convention makes the Guide a key tool for non-UNECE countries interested in acceding to the Convention to learn more about it and to prepare their respective legal and institutional frameworks accordingly. □

The Guide is available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33657&L=0>.

## Facts and Figures

### GDP growth rates in 2011 and 2012



Source: UNECE Statistical Database ([www.unece.org/stats/data](http://www.unece.org/stats/data)).

## The production of most EECCA countries grew in 2012

Coming out of the global economic downturn, most countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) recorded GDP growth in 2011 and 2012. However, with the exception of Armenia and Azerbaijan, growth rates slowed down in 2012 compared to 2011 in all EECCA countries. In contrast, the 28-nation European Union witnessed a 0.3% GDP decline in 2012.

Only Kyrgyzstan and Moldova experienced a negative GDP growth rate in 2012. The recession in those two countries was led by a 20.6% decrease in industrial production and a 23.4% fall in agricultural activity respectively.

In the last two years, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan showed the strongest gains. While Uzbekistan's annual GDP growth has been stable around 8.3% since 2009, in Turkmenistan it has varied between 6% and 15% in the last four years. □

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