Strengthening institutional framework for transboundary cooperation

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Water Convention Article 9 – bilateral and multilateral cooperation

- Under UNECE Water Convention agreements and joint bodies (such as lake or river commissions) as **an obligation** for riparian parties – a unique feature

**Three requirements to agreements:**
- Define waters (“specify the catchment area, or part(s) thereof”)
- Embrace “issues covered by this Convention, as well as any other issues”
- Provide for the establishment of joint bodies (Art.9(2))
Joint bodies

- "Joint body" means any bilateral or multilateral commission or other appropriate institutional arrangements for cooperation between the Riparian Parties (Art. 1(5))
- "Commission" – an ‘umbrella’ term (more stable structure, composed of national delegations, composition not restricted to water agencies)
Scope of activities of joint bodies

- Great diversity
- Trend: widening the scope, tasks and powers in order to enable joint bodies to implement the basin approach and broader IWRM

Functions of joint bodies:
- Provide coordination and advice
- Executive function
- Monitor implementation of agreement and settle differences and disputes
Tasks of joint bodies, Art. 9(2):

- Art.9(2) – Key tasks
  - Collect data to identify pollution sources
  - Elaborate monitoring programmes
  - Exchange information
  - Establish warning systems
  - Discuss planned measures
  - Participate in EIA, etc.

- List is non-exhaustive: Parties may determine their priorities according to the needs
Organisational structure: optimal elements

- Decision-making body
- Executive body
- Subsidiary bodies (working and expert groups)
- Secretariat - support body

Possible elements:

- Audit body
- Consultative Group of Donors
- National branches of a joint body
- Information center, training center
- Observers – NGOs
More details:

Guidance and publications on joint bodies under the Convention:

www.unece.org/env/water