



How the Helsinki Water Convention promotes transboundary water cooperation on the ground

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Implementation of the Helsinki Water Convention



- Significant diversity within UNECE region:
 - Water challenges
 - ✓ Growing problem of water scarcity
 - ✓ Extreme events
 - Political landscape
 - Economic and social conditions

Implementation of the Helsinki Water Convention

- 20 years of experience in supporting transboundary water cooperation
 - Capacity to adapt to changing conditions and to respond to countries demand
 - Continuity of efforts that ensured sustained progress and long-term results
 - Strong drive and ownership by Parties and the close involvement of non-Parties
 - Capacity to build trust
 - Concrete deliverables

In practice...

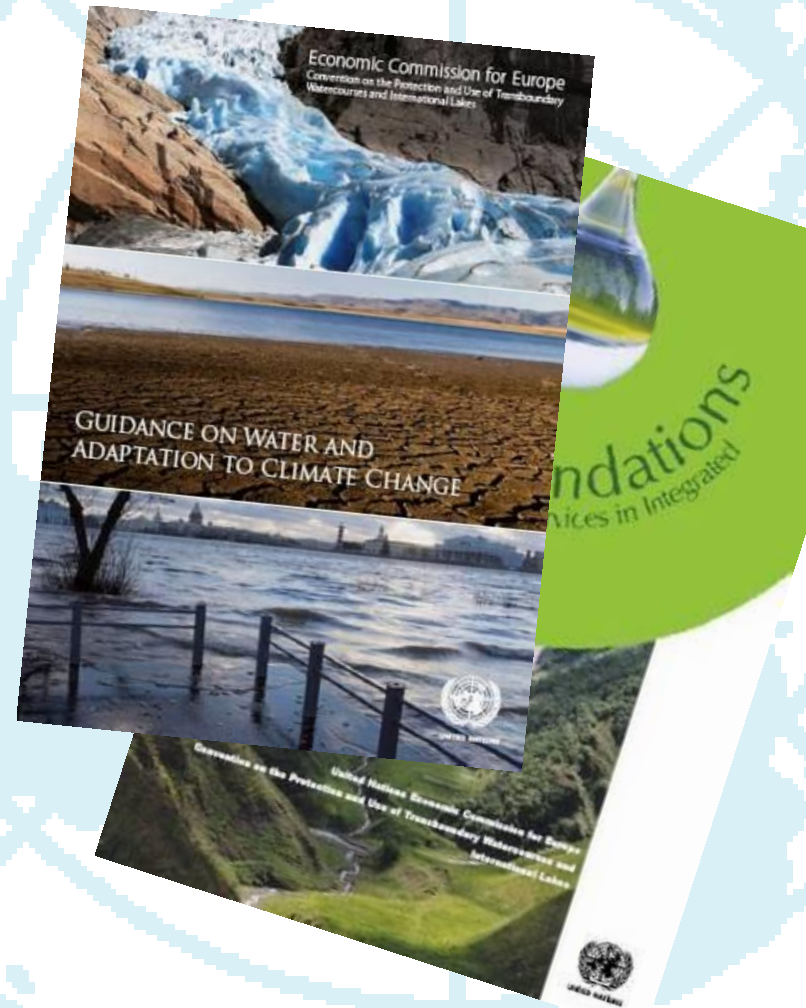
- The Convention played a crucial role in the region in supporting cooperation
- Most of the existing agreements in Europe are modelled on the Convention (Danube, Sava, Bug, Kazakh-Russian, Lake Peipsi, also the Water Framework Directive)
- Influenced the work of river commissions
- Promoted the IWRM approach

Support to implementation: soft-law tools, projects, advisory services

- Guidelines on:
 - Implementation and ratification
 - Monitoring and assessment
 - Flood management
 - Climate change adaptation
 - Payments for ecosystem services
 - Public participation
 - Model provisions on flood protection and groundwater
- Projects on the ground
 - National Policy Dialogues
 - Climate adaptation
 - Assessing benefits of common management
- Advisory services
 - New agreements (successful work e.g. at EECCA region)
 - Establishing joint bodies

Responding to challenges

- Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change
- Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services
- Model provisions on transboundary groundwaters



Practical support to establish cooperation: Tajik-Afghan example

Establishing cooperation on hydrology and environment in upper Amudarya:

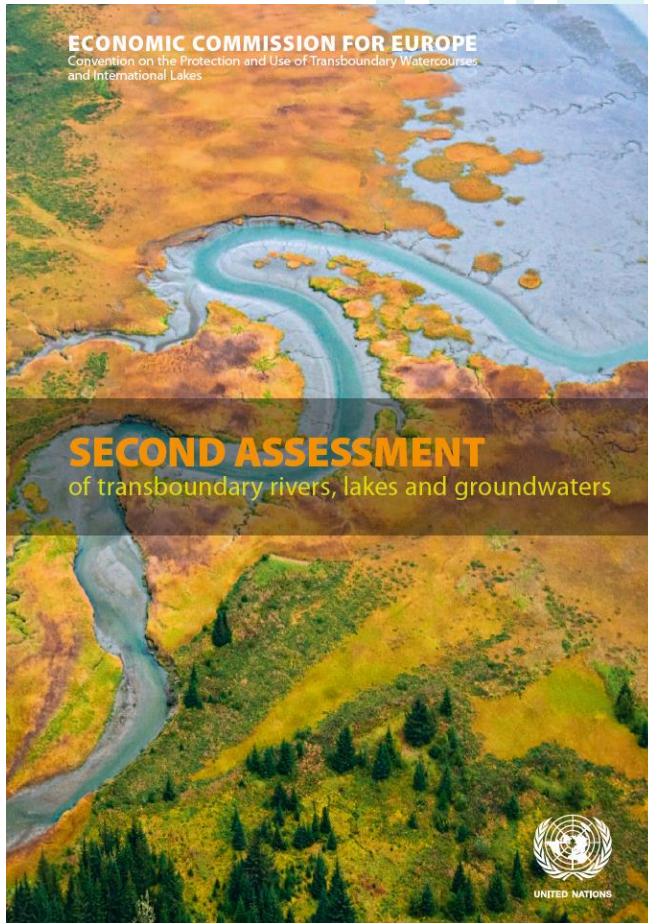
- bilateral working group
- exchange of hydrological data
- visits to hydrological monitoring stations
- cooperation with border guards
- first steps: cooperation in flood management and emergency situations, agreeing on compatible hydrological monitoring equipment, methods, models
- vision for the future: integrating Afghanistan in the Aral Sea cooperation (IFAS)



Intergovernmental bilateral Dniester Basin Treaty of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (Rome, 29 November 2012)



Assessing results



The Second Assessment

- Covers more than 140 rivers, 25 lakes, about 200 groundwaters and 25 Ramsar Sites and other wetlands of transboundary importance
 - Involved more than 250 experts from 50 countries
 - Illustrates pressure factors, quantity and quality status, transboundary impacts, responses and future trends
- => Thematic assessment on water/food/energy/ecosystem nexus

Helsinki Water Convention

Work programme 2013-2015

Area 1: Support to **implementation**

Area 2: EU Water Initiative **National** Policy Dialogues

Area 3: Assessing the **benefits** of transboundary cooperation

Area 4: Adapting to **climate change** in transboundary basins

Area 5: Water- food-energy-ecosystems **nexus**

Area 6: **Opening** of the Convention

Area 7: **Promotion** of the Convention and establishment of strategic partnerships

Assessing the benefits of transboundary water cooperation

- **Objectives:** Support countries to estimate the full range of potential benefits of transboundary water cooperation to encourage the broadening of cooperation
- **Methodology:** Development of a Policy Guidance Note on Identifying, Assessing and Communicating the benefits of transboundary water cooperation
- **Activities:**
 - Expert framing workshop (June 2013)
 - Workshop to gather & share experiences (22-23 May 2014)
 - Expert Workshop to finalize the policy guidance note and discuss next steps (Nov. 2014, tbc)

Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus – assessment of selected basins

- A conceptual picture of the nexus developed, substantiated with indicators & quantification of selected aspects, future scenarios
- Identification of synergies and opportunities for benefits from co-management, inter-sectoral coordination & transboundary cooperation through a participatory inter-sectoral process and supporting analysis
- Some basins to be assessed in Africa, Asia and pan-Europe
- The methodology piloted on the Alazani/Ganyh (GE, AZ); basin assessments Jan 2014-April 2015; report 2015
- To be applied to NWSAS

Strengths of the Helsinki Water Convention

- Sound legal framework coupled with action to support implementation
- Catalyst for cooperation
- Strong ownership by Parties
- Non-Parties also participate
- Continuously evolving
- Cooperation with numerous UN agencies, NGOs and other partners



Thank you!

More information

<http://unece.org/env/water>

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