

THE WATER CONVENTION: 20 years of successful water cooperation

1989-1992

- Discharge Rule of Lake Saimaa and river Vuoksi (FI-RU), 1989
- The Central Asian States agreement (KZ, KG, TJ, TM, UZ) establishes the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia
- Germany-Poland, Russian Federation-Ukraine and Kazakhstan-Russian Federation agreements
- Water Convention negotiated by the Working Party on Water Problems under the auspices of the Senior Advisers to UNECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems (1990-1992)
- The Water Convention is adopted in Helsinki

1992

- Recommendations to UNECE Governments on Water-Quality Criteria and Objectives
- Guidelines on the Ecosystem Approach in Water Management

1993

- Recommendations to UNECE Governments on the Prevention of Water Pollution from Hazardous Substances
- Guidelines for UNECE Governments on the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution from Fertilizers and Pesticides in Agriculture

1994

- Mesta/Nestos (BG, GR), Czech Republic-Germany and Mongolia-Russian Federation agreements

1995

- The Water Convention enters into force
- First Guidelines on Water-Quality Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers adopted
- Start of pilot projects on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers

1996

- Protocol to the Ems-Dollart Treaty (DE, NL) regulates the cooperation on water and nature protection issues in the Ems estuary
- Convention on the International Commission for the Protection of the Oder (CZ, DE, PL)
- Croatia-Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina-Croatia and Poland-Ukraine agreements

1997

- Albufeira Convention (ES-PT)
- Joint Expert Group established under Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions

1998

- UN Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention) adopted
- Estonia-Russian Federation, Poland-Slovakia, Hungary-Ukraine and Romania-Ukraine agreements

1999

- Convention on the Protection of the Rhine (CH, DE, FR, LU, NL, EU) following the 1963 Convention
- Agreement on the status of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
- Czech Republic-Slovakia agreement
- The Protocol on Water and Health is adopted in London
- First inventory of transboundary groundwaters in the pan-European region

2000

- Adoption of the EU Water Framework Directive
- Revised Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers adopted
- Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Groundwaters adopted and start of related pilot projects
- Report on the relationship between the UNECE Water Convention and the UN Watercourses Convention prepared by the Task Force on Legal and Administrative Aspects
- Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention

2001

- Establishment of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) in the Netherlands

2002

- Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (BA, HR, SI, RS) and Belarus-Russian Federation agreement
- New Meuse (BE, DE, FR, LU, NL) and Scheldt (BE, FR, NL) agreements entrust the Scheldt and Meuse commissions with the coordination of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive
- Major floods in Central Europe trigger the development of model provisions for transboundary flood management under the Water Convention
- 2nd International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe organized in Poland to celebrate the Convention's 10th anniversary

2003

- Amendment to the Convention adopted at the 3rd Meeting of the Parties to allow accession to the Convention to all UN Member States
- Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes adopted
- Protocol on Civil Liability signed at the 5th "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference as a response to the Baia Mare accident

2004

- Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Lake Ohrid and its Watershed (AL, MK)
- Amendment of the International Warning and Emergency Plan for the Elbe River and enhancement with the Elbe Alarm Model
- Start of the Dniester Project to facilitate cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine

2005

- Albania-Greece and Lithuania-Poland agreements
- Chu-Talas Commission (KZ-KG) established
- Entry into force of the Protocol on Water and Health

2006

- Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) adopted
- Strategies on Monitoring and Assessment adopted
- Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Management adopted
- Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines, developed jointly with the Industrial Accidents Convention
- Dam safety project starts in Central Asia
- Start of the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on IWRM under the EU Water Initiative in Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine

2007

- The new Franco-Swiss Genevese aquifer agreement is signed
- Iran-Turkmenistan and Croatia-Montenegro agreements
- EU Floods Directive
- First Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters presented at the 6th "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference
- Start of the activities on climate change adaptation

2008

- Countries finalize first River Basin Management Plans under the EU Water Framework Directive
- Amendment of the Albufeira Convention (ES-PT) to address climate variability
- China-Russian Federation agreement
- Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Tailing Management Facilities developed jointly with the Industrial Accidents Convention
- NPD on IWRM initiated in Kyrgyzstan
- Creation of the UN-Water Task Force on transboundary waters, co-chaired by UNECE and UNESCO
- Water quality project starts in Central Asia

2009

- Memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the management of the extended transboundary Drin basin (AL, GR, MK, Kosovo (United Nations administered region, Security Council resolution 1244), ME)
- China-Kazakhstan water quality agreement
- MoU "Towards the implementation of the Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan supporting the sustainable development of the region" (HU, RO, RS, SK, UA) signed, following the 2004 MoU to develop a River Basin Management Plan for the Tisza River
- Amendment of the Albufeira Convention (ES-PT) to address climate variability
- China-Russian Federation agreement
- IWAC transferred to Slovakia
- Guide to Implementing the Water Convention adopted
- Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change adopted
- Non-UNECE countries start to get involved in Water Convention activities

2010

- New Finland-Sweden, Republic of Moldova-Romania and Samur (AZ-RU) agreements
- Protocol on Flood Protection to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River basin
- Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area (AL, GR, MK)
- The International Commission for the Protection of Lake Geneva adopts its action plan for 2011-2020
- NPDs on IWRM initiated in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan
- Start of the Kura Project to facilitate cooperation between Georgia and Azerbaijan
- Start of the pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins and on payment for ecosystem services

2011

- Finnish-Russian Commission holds its 50th meeting
- NPD on IWRM initiated in Kazakhstan
- Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwater developed
- Proposal for the Implementation Committee developed
- Start of the work on the water-energy-food nexus in the transboundary context
- Expected globalization of the Water Convention
- International conference on Europe-Asia cooperation; formal interest expressed by non-UNECE countries in joining the Convention
- Start of a project between Tajikistan and Afghanistan

2012

