

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE
PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION
AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL
LAKES**

First meeting
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Agenda item 4 (b)

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**OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND
INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Note by the secretariat

1. The fourth Meeting of the Parties to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) took place in Bonn, Germany, from 20 to 22 November 2006.
2. Parties to the Convention revised and endorsed the activities carried out in the last three years and adopted their workplan for 2007-2009.
3. Below are listed activities included in the Convention's workplan for the period 2007-2009 which are relevant to the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health and which will require sharing of information and cooperation between the Water Convention's subsidiary bodies and those of the Protocol on Water and Health.
4. To carry out the 2007-2009 workplan, the Parties to the Convention established two Working Groups - one on Integrated Water Resources Management and one on Monitoring and Assessment – and the Legal Board. Under the Working Groups, specific task forces (e.g. the Water and Climate Task Force) and core groups (e.g. the Gore Group on Groundwater) were also established to carry out particular activities.

Assistance to Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health on issues related to target setting, assessment and reporting

5. The Parties to the Convention agreed that the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment will cooperate with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health, through the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting, to review and assess progress of Protocol's Parties towards the achievement of the targets established under article 6, paragraph 2 of the Protocol, and to prepare guidelines for harmonized reporting, in particular in relation to water management targets.
6. Cooperation will be sought also with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

Water and Climate adaptation in transboundary basins, including flood and drought risk management

7. The Parties to the Convention agreed to develop, under the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management (WG IWRM), guidance on Water and Climate Adaptation for presentation to the fifth Meeting of the Parties. The guidance document will be prepared by the Water and Climate Task Force, replacing the Flood Task Force. The work will be targeted to support in particular cooperation and decision-making in transboundary basins on a range of relevant or emerging issues as a result of climate change, including issues not covered by the 2000 Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention.
8. The work will address possible impacts of climate change on flood and drought occurrences, health related aspects as well as practical ways to cope with the transboundary impacts through adaptation, through inter alia integrated management of surface and groundwater for flood and drought mitigation and response, including benefits of floods to increase water availability and to improve the ecological status of waters. Land use, regional and spatial planning as well as land use management, and their role in reducing flood and drought risks and damage potential, in particular in the transboundary context, will also be considered. Appropriate use will be made of the analysis of some successful cases and/or ongoing projects on transboundary cooperation.
9. Moreover, under this activity, the Task Force will support the transfer of the experience and the results of the European Network of Expertise on Flood Risk Management to non-EU countries. To this end, two workshops will be organised on flood forecasting and flood risk mapping. Furthermore, the Water and Climate Task Force and the Legal Board will assist Parties and non-Parties in using the model provisions for transboundary flood management. On the basis of legal developments in the region and experience gained in the use of the model provisions, the two bodies will further develop the provisions and their supporting commentary, as needed.
10. Lead Parties for this activity are Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland in cooperation with Hungary and Greece (lead Party for the flood model provisions).
11. Several countries already announced at the meeting their interest in participating in this activity: Bulgaria, Finland, Georgia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Ukraine.
12. It was also agreed that cooperation would be sought with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health for health-related aspects, the WMO Commission for Hydrology, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, UNESCO, UNDP, UNEP, OECD, WHO, EU, DG Research, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the GEF, REC and the Environment and Security Initiative and ICWC.

Management of transboundary groundwaters in the UNECE region

13. Within this programme area, under the auspices of the WG IWRM, it was agreed that the Core Group on Groundwater would develop activities related to:
 - (a) Water and health issues, to support the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health, in particular in relation to the use of groundwater as a source of drinking water;
 - (b) Groundwater aspects of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Groundwater Directive, including the promotion outside the EU of the lessons learned under the

Common Implementation Strategy for the WFD related to groundwater (monitoring, protected areas, direct/indirect discharge to groundwaters) as well as progress under the currently developed Groundwater Directive. Specific capacity-building workshops could be organized in EECCA and SEE; and

(c) Groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

14. These activities would be carried out in cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

15. The Lead Party would be Slovakia through the International Water Assessment Centre.

16. Several countries already announced at the meeting their interest in participating in this activity: Hungary Lithuania, Switzerland and Ukraine.

17. It was also agreed that cooperation would be sought with UNESCO and in particular its International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), the GWP (for the Roundtable on Transboundary Groundwaters in SEE).

Capacity-building for integrated water resources management: Integrated management of transboundary waters in EECCA

18. Within the framework of the on-going UNECE project “Capacity for Water Cooperation” (CWC), this programme element aims to strengthen the capacity of transboundary water management in EECCA. The objective is to create a framework which enables cross-fertilization and exchange of experience between river basins and countries regarding regulatory, institutional, methodological and other aspects of integrated management of transboundary waters and, at the same time, bring in valuable experience from other parts of the UNECE region. CWC also aims to establish a network of EECCA experts involved in transboundary water management who are used to cooperating and sharing knowledge.

19. It was agreed that in the period 2007–2009, yearly CWC workshops would be organized on specific aspects of transboundary water management, such as the work of transboundary commissions, the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health, management of transboundary floods or the development of river basin management plans.

20. This activity is implemented by the secretariat and targets all EECCA countries and the countries with which they share waters.

21. Cooperation will be sought with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, UNESCO, OSCE, the REC, the EECCA RECs and others to be defined.
