

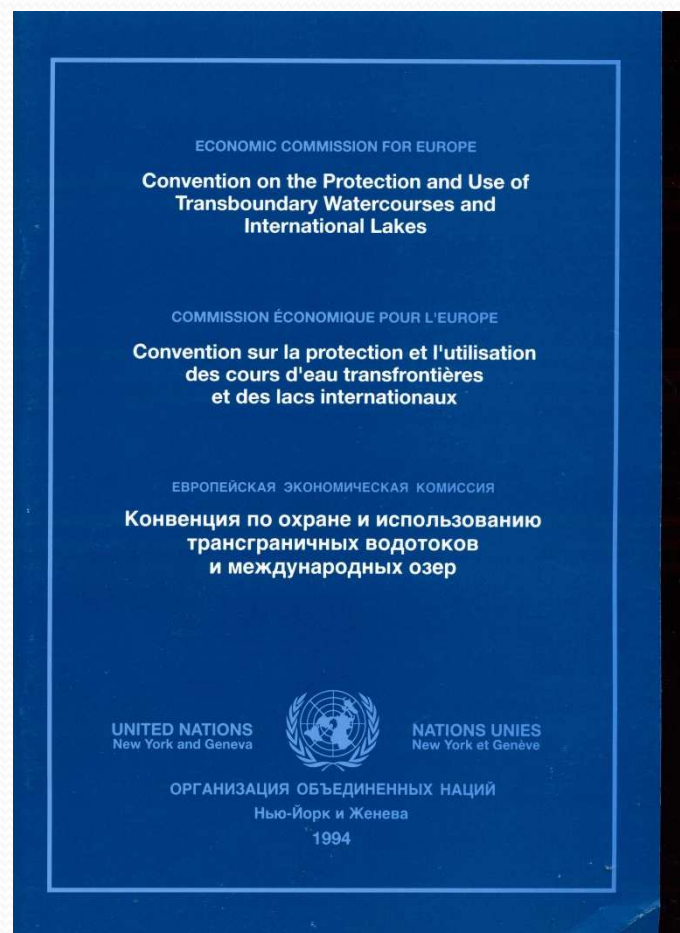
# **Background to the nexus assessment: how the UNECE Water Convention promotes cooperation across borders and sectors**

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UNECE Water Convention



Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

# The UNECE Water Convention

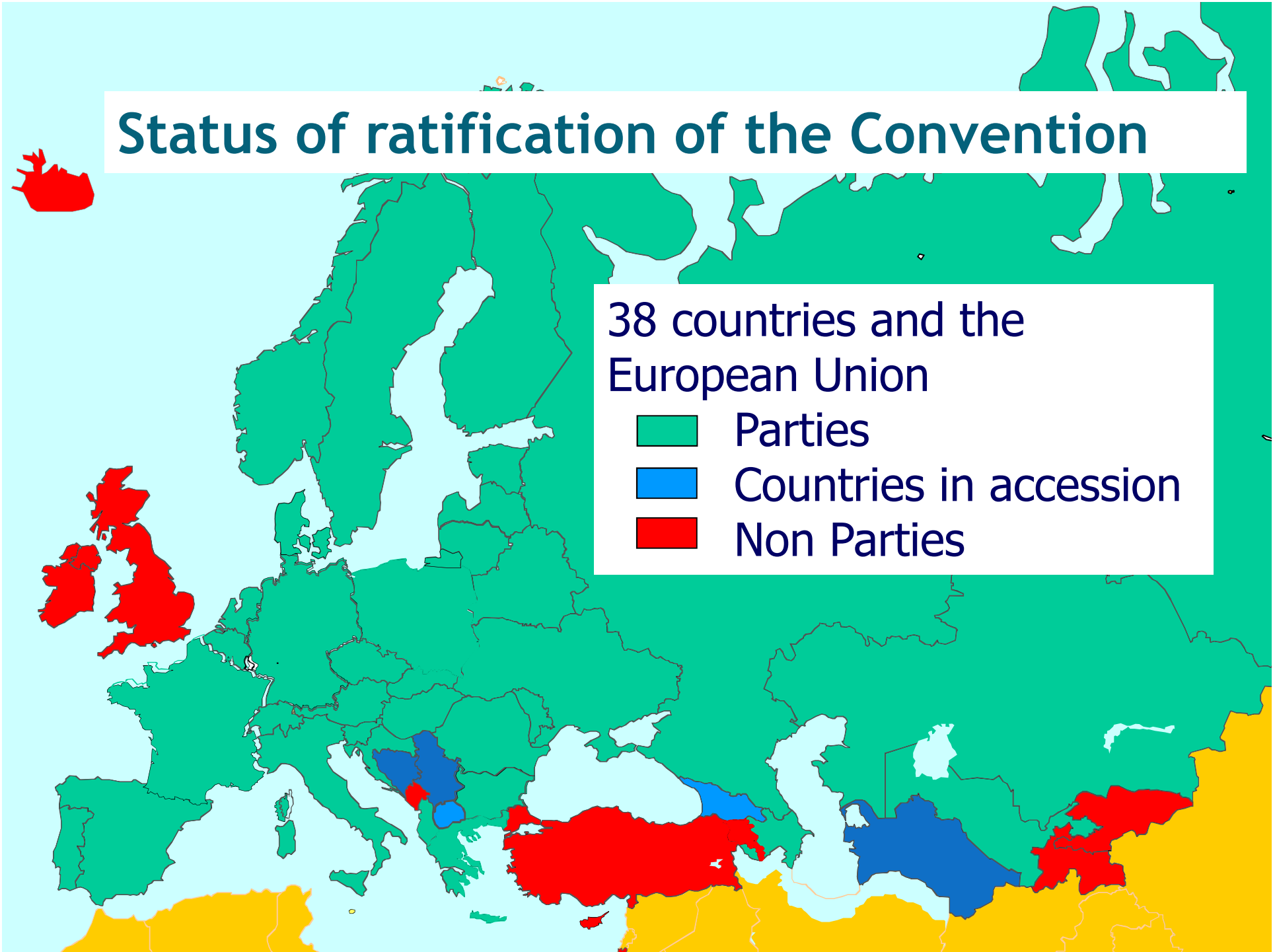


- Signed on 17 March 1992
- Entered into force on 6 October 1996
- Protocol on Water and Health adopted in 1999, entered into force in 2005
- Protocol on Civil Liability adopted in 2003

# Status of ratification of the Convention

38 countries and the  
European Union

- Parties
- Countries in accession
- Non Parties



# 2003 Amendment globalizing the Convention



- Opening up the Convention to countries beyond the UNECE region
  - Entered into force on 6 February
  - Decision by MOP6 clarifies procedure for accession by countries outside UNECE = same process as for UNECE countries
- => Promote exchange/share experience
- => Raise awareness and build capacity
- => Work together

## Main obligations under the Convention



- Protection of transboundary waters by preventing, controlling and reducing transboundary impacts
  - Reasonable and equitable use of transboundary waters
  - Obligation to cooperate through agreements and joint institutions
- => Overall objective of sustainability



## Step-by-step approach

- Due diligence nature of the obligation to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts
- “All appropriate measures” depend on potential risk involved, capacity of the country...
- Good practice to develop a national implementation plan

# Holistic approach

- Covers surface and groundwaters, and links to the recipient seas
  - Catchments area concept => IWRM
  - **Transboundary impacts means significant adverse effect on human health and safety, flora, fauna, soil, air, water, climate, landscape and historical monuments or other physical structures, and socio-economic conditions resulting from a change in the conditions of transboundary waters caused by a human activity**
- ⇒ Looks at economic, social and environmental dimensions of water
- ⇒ NEXUS!



## Two categories of obligations

- For all Parties => also benefit for national legislation
- For Riparian Parties => the Convention does not replace basin agreements



## Provisions relating to Riparian Parties

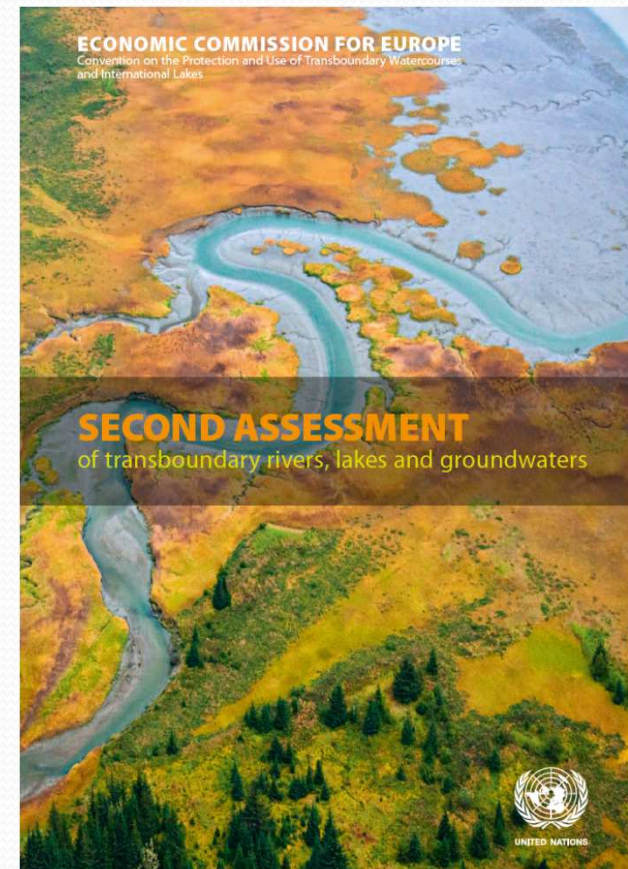
- Cooperate on the basis of equality and reciprocity
- Conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements or revise existing ones
- Establish joint bodies (e.g. river commissions)
- Consult and exchange of information
- **Carry out at regular intervals joint or coordinated assessments of the conditions of transboundary waters and the effectiveness of measures taken for the prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impact**
- **Elaborate joint objectives and concerted action programme for their shared waters**

## Background to assessment under the Convention and the nexus

- In 2003 the Parties to the Water Convention decided to regularly carry out regional assessments; First Assessment in 2007, Second Assessment in 2011
- Among the findings of the Second Assessment: Policy integration and coherence remains weak across the region; difficult to put into practice, painful trade offs
- Water, energy and food sectors strongly interlinked > impacts & trade-offs, also potential synergies — very topical but little done at transboundary level
- High demand in the countries for effective, practical solutions for alleviating the negative impacts in the nexus

# Common issues in the region from the findings of the Second Assessment

- Uneven level of transboundary cooperation and related deficiencies
- Frictions between sectors about water use in many basins
- Policy integration and coherence remains weak across the region; difficult to put into practice, painful trade offs.  
Stronger governance needed!
- Agriculture (diffuse pollution, water use)
- Hydromorphological changes
- Climate change – projected impacts vary across the region, few studies & little coordination at transboundary level



# What does the nexus entail in the transboundary context?

- Finding a balance between various uses and protection of the resource: address and reduce trade offs and increase synergies
- Needed:
  - Increased understanding and dialogue
  - Effective institutions and legal frameworks
  - Decision-support tools (monitoring, impact assessment etc.)
  - Regulations / economic tools
  - Sharing / solidarity/political willingness



# Benefits of the assessment under the Convention

- Improved knowledge base about linkages between sectors for decision-making at national, basin and transboundary levels, gap identification
- Identification and exchange (also UNECE – non-UNECE) of good practices for addressing trade-offs and reconciling different resource use (primarily water) for application in resource management;
- Promoting cooperation at the basin level, through both political and technical dialogue
- Capacity building: workshops, exchanges, self-assessment, knowledge mobilization in the process
- Increased public awareness, dialogue and access to information
- Serves to inform, guide and stimulate further action by different actors

# Objectives of the nexus assessment

The general aims from the programme of work for 2013-2015 adopted the Meeting of the Parties:

- provide a picture of the interdependencies (or their understanding) across water, ecosystems, energy, food and other areas, such as climate change and biodiversity, in terms of uses, needs, economic and social benefits and potential synergies, as well as conflicts and trade-offs;
- present the suite of sectoral policies together with an analysis of their integration, coherence and capacity to positively address the water, energy and food security nexus and improve water, energy and food security, taking into account linkages between water and land management.

# Objectives of the 1<sup>st</sup> Task Force meeting

- Discuss the process of preparation of the Assessment
- Explore the needs and preferences of the riparian countries, river basin commissions and stakeholders in the basins proposed to be assessed to agree on the scope and objectives and on deriving information and analysis needs
- Review past and on-going efforts to analyse the nexus and to provide guidance for sectoral (and inter-sectoral) decision-making to learn from such exercises;
- Discuss and agree on the approach to assessing the nexus, including the methodology; and
- Discuss and agreed on the basins to be covered and agree on the next steps in the process.

# What we need

- Diverse expertise
- Insights and active participation to shape the approach into a valuable, relevant exercise that supports the policy and decisions at different levels
- A partnership that can deliver the task
- Identification of synergies with other initiatives
- Commitment from the participating countries/authorities and actors
- Adequate data for a meaningful analysis