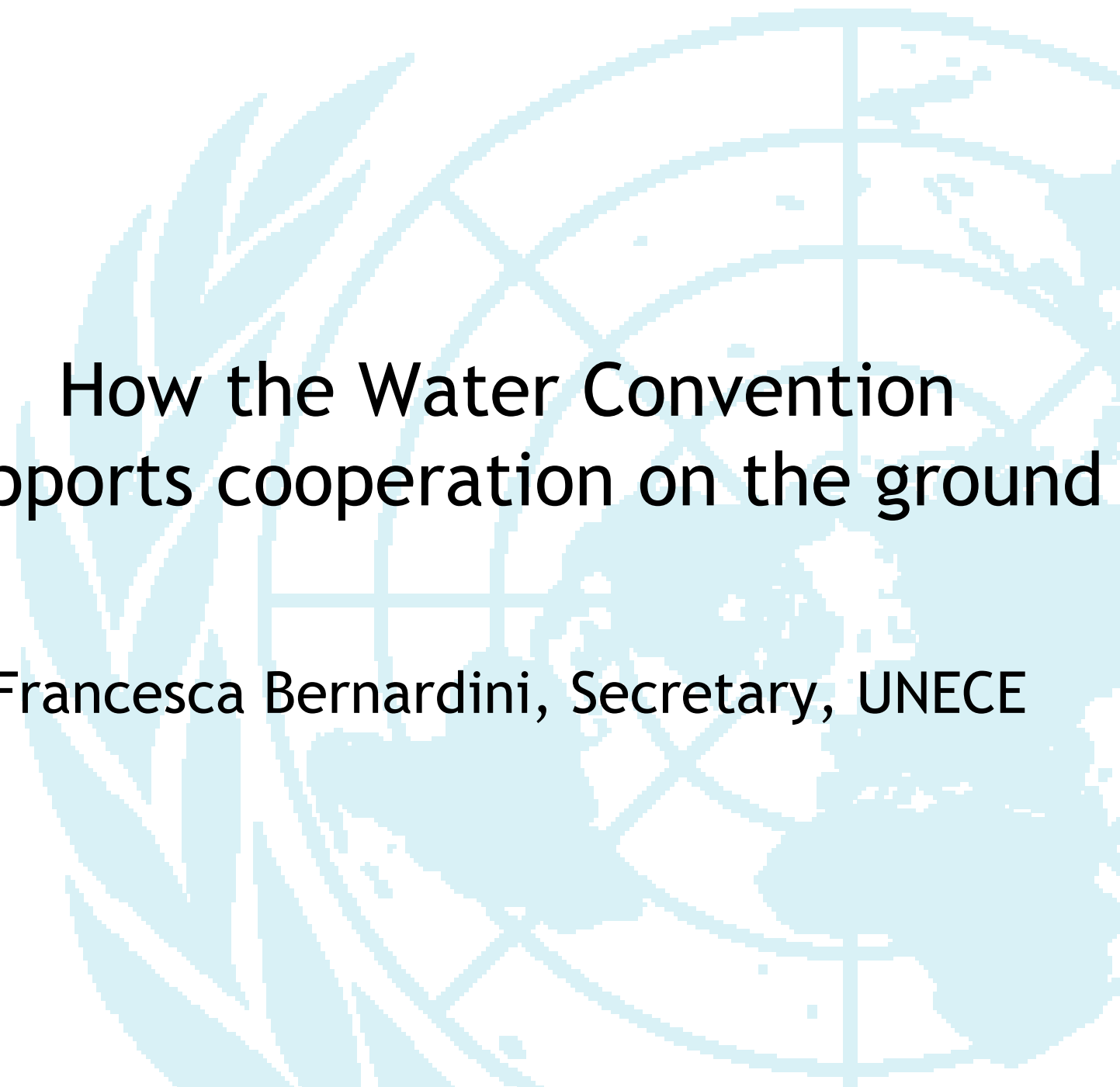


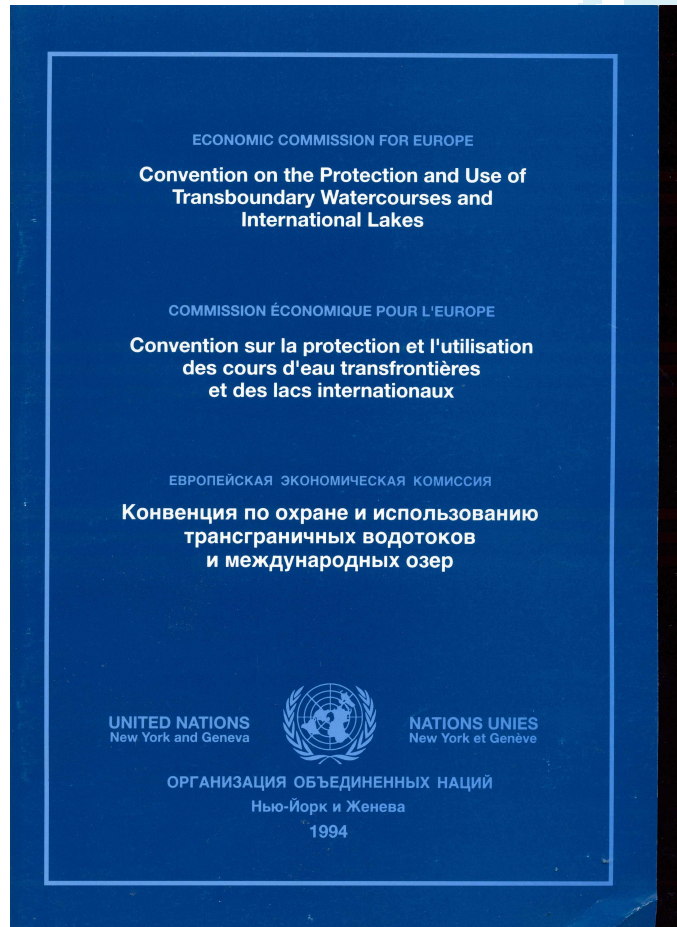


# How the Water Convention supports cooperation on the ground

Francesca Bernardini, Secretary, UNECE



# The 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

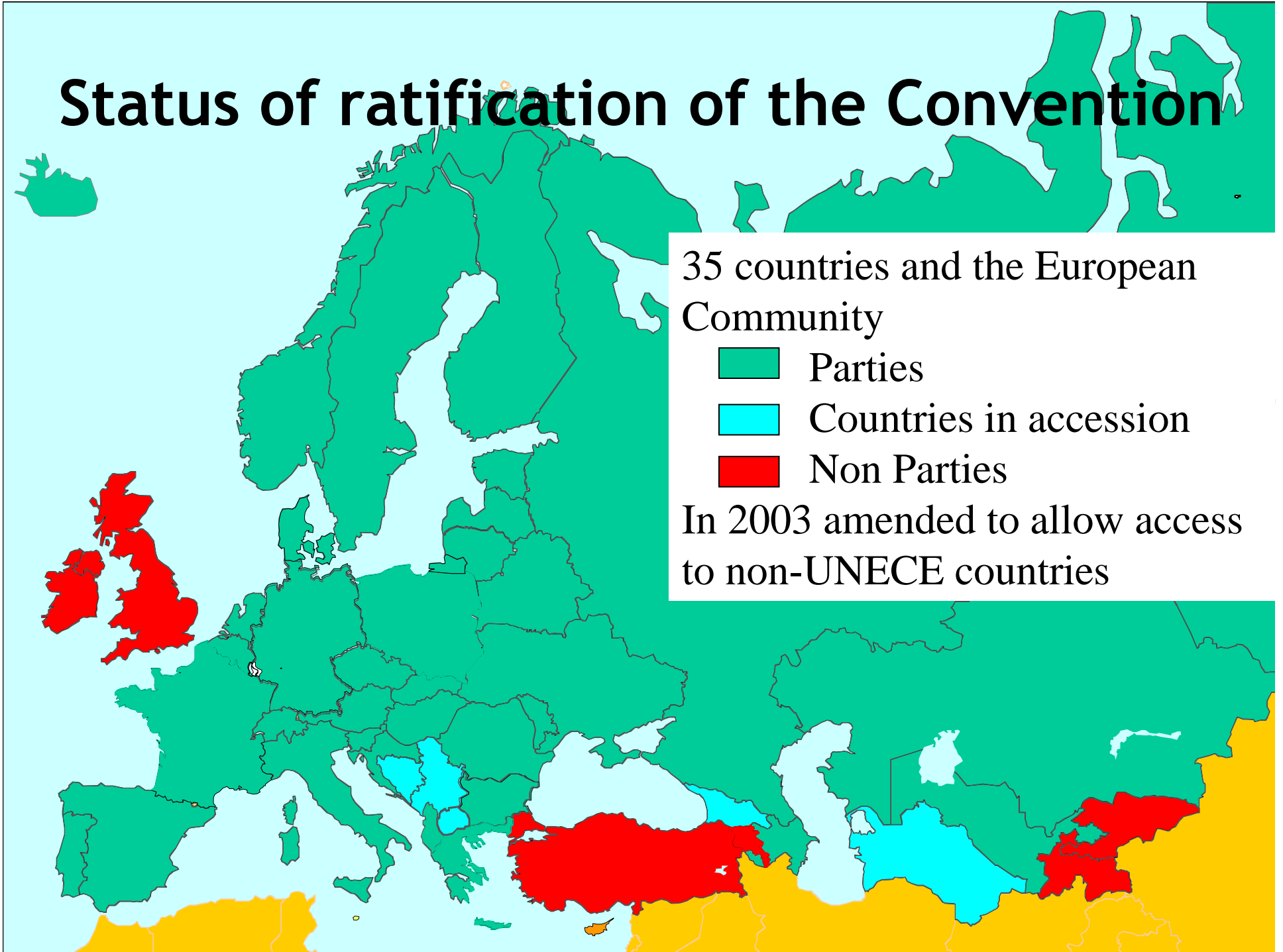
35 countries and the European Community

 Parties

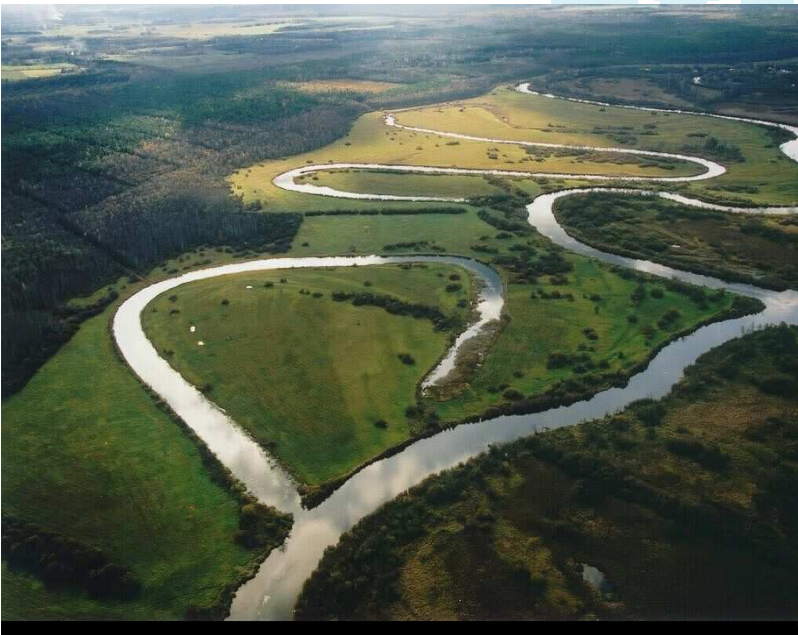
 Countries in accession

 Non Parties

In 2003 amended to allow access to non-UNECE countries



# 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**

# Holistic approach



- Transboundary impacts include impacts on human health and safety, flora, fauna, soil, air, water, climate, landscape and historical monuments or other physical structures, and socio-economic conditions
- Surface and groundwaters, and links to the recipient seas

# General obligations for all Parties

- Licensing of waste-water discharges by the competent national authorities and monitoring of authorized discharges
- Best environmental practice for non-point pollution sources
- Minimization of the risk of accidental pollution
- Application of EIA

# Provisions relating to Riparian Parties

- Cooperate on the basis of equality and reciprocity
- Conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements
- Establish joint bodies (e.g. river commissions)
- Consult and exchange of information
- Joint monitoring and assessment
- Elaborate joint objectives and concerted action programme for their shared waters

## In practice...

- Played a crucial role in the region in supporting cooperation
- Most of the existing agreements are modelled on the Convention (Danube, Sava, Bug, Kazakh-Russian, Lake Peipsi, also the WFD)
- Influenced the work of river commissions



# How? A living instrument

- Assistance to implementation
- Capacity building
- Projects in the field
- A collective framework



# Responding to new challenges

- Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change
- Recommendations on payments for ecosystem services



## Action at the national level

- National Policy Dialogues under the EU Water Initiative
- Promote reform of water sector and improve governance
- Based on the EU WFD and the Water Convention

# Assessing results



## The first Assessment:

- covered 140 rivers, 30 lakes and 70 aquifers
- Involved more than 150 experts from 40 countries
- Illustrated major problems in the region
- Currently second edition under preparation: Central Asia will be a main focus

# Strengths

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





# Thank you!

## More information

including guidelines, publications and information on activities under the Convention can be found at

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

[water.convention@unece.org](mailto:water.convention@unece.org)