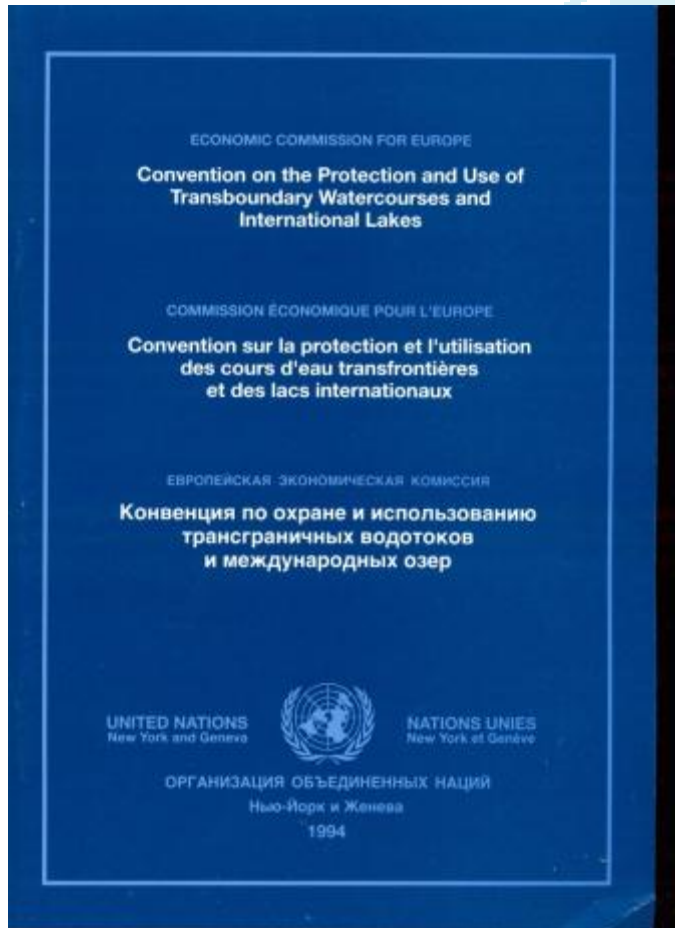




# **The global opening of Water Convention: how can it help adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins?**

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Protection and Use of Transboundary  
Watercourses and International Lakes

# The UNECE Water Convention

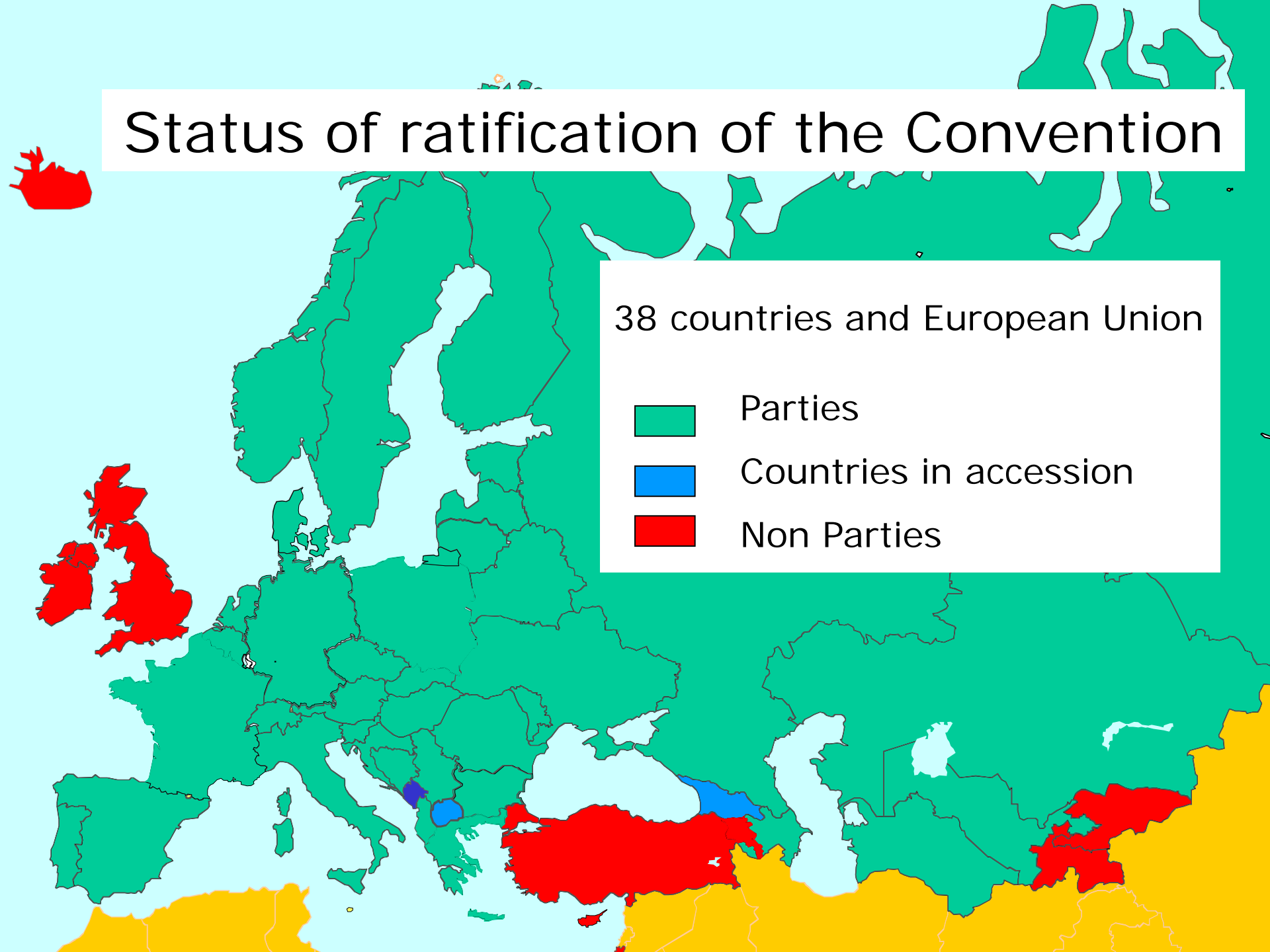


- Signed on 17 March 1992
- Entered into force on 6 October 1996
- Protocol on Water and Health adopted in 1999, entered into force in 2005
- Protocol on Civil Liability adopted in 2003

# Status of ratification of the Convention

38 countries and European Union

-  Parties
-  Countries in accession
-  Non Parties



# Opening Convention to all United Nations Member States



- Amendment entered into force in February 2013, so all countries can likely join Convention as of end of 2013
- Governing body approved all future requests for accession
  - = > Promote exchange/share experience
  - = > Raise awareness and build capacity
  - = > Work together

# Water Convention – negotiated in Europe, but relevant beyond

Supports great diversity of countries in terms of economic development, riparian relationships (upstream & downstream), challenges

- Convention developed progressively & accumulated experience in relation to many universal water problems (reflected e.g. guidelines)
- Provides forum & framework for bilateral & multilateral cooperation as well as for sharing of experience & good practices (soon more globally)
- Broad cooperation with numerous UN agencies, NGOs and other partners
- Participation in activities & interest expressed from outside UNECE region demonstrates the value

# Main obligations



- 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 is sustainability**



# Two categories of obligations

- I. Obligations for all Parties => also benefit for national legislation
- II. Obligations for Riparian Parties => Convention does not replace basin agreements





# General obligations for all Parties

- Licensing of wastewater discharges by competent national authorities and monitoring of authorized discharges
- Best environmental practice for non-point pollution sources
- Minimization of risk of accidental pollution
- Application of environmental impact assessment





# Provisions relating to Riparian Parties

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

# Why transboundary cooperation in adaptation?

- Prevent negative impacts of unilateral adaptation measures in riparian States, so preventing possible conflict
  - Enable more effective & efficient adaptation through
    - Wider knowledge base
    - Larger planning space: take measures in basin where they have optimum effect
    - Possibility to share costs and benefits
- = > Cooperation reduces uncertainty and costs



# UNECE Water Convention and climate change

- Water Convention aims to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating and promoting cooperation
- Provisions relevant for climate change:
  - Prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts including those related to adaptation to or mitigation measures
  - Use waters in a reasonable and equitable way
  - Cooperate on the basis of equality and reciprocity
  - Set joint water quality objectives, use best available technology, exchange information, follow the precautionary principle, develop joint monitoring and common research, assist each other...



# Looking ahead – new programme of work 2013-2015

- Support implementation and accession (projects on the ground, capacity building; Implementation Committee)
- EU Water Initiative: National Policy Dialogues
- **Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins**
- **Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus**
- **Quantifying benefits of transboundary water cooperation**
- **Opening of Convention**



# Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

- Programme of pilot projects and global network of transboundary basins working on adaptation to climate change – basins are welcome to join!
- Collection of good practices and lessons learned
- Global platform for exchanging experience: annual workshops
- Based on the *Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change*



# Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus

- Thematic assessment examining water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in selected transboundary basins from around the world



# Quantifying benefits of transboundary cooperation

- Development of an approach for quantifying benefits of cooperation and gathering of experience
  - clarification of definitions
  - development of benefit typology
  - review of methodologies
  - case studies, workshop
- Guidance note on benefits of cooperation



An aerial photograph on the left side of the slide shows a winding river with a circular structure, possibly a dam or a reservoir, in the upper left. The background of the slide features a faint, light blue globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines.

# Planned activities for 2013-2015 related to opening

- Participation of countries in regular activities
- Build capacity on Convention and promote exchange of experience
- Synergies with 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses
- Cooperation with other partners to support implementation of Convention(s)
- Organization of two workshops on joint bodies

# Advantages of the Convention

- Sound legal framework coupled with action to support implementation
- Catalyst for cooperation, balanced approach for both upstream and downstream countries
- Strong ownership by Parties
- Also non-Parties participate and contribute
- Convention's work is continuously evolving: climate change, ecosystem services
- 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)