



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

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management
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Agenda item 9

**NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUES ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT**

Submitted by the secretariat

This document informs the meeting participants about main objectives and achievements under the National Policy Dialogues, being the main operational instrument of the European Union Water Initiative. It also provides an overview about recent activities as well as of the plans for the future work.

The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management is invited to examine the document, assess the progress in implementation of the programme and provide further guidance for future activities to be included in the Convention's draft programme of work for 2010-2012. The Working Group is also invited to consider providing additional funding for the activities, including in-kind contributions by experts.

Introduction

1. National Policy Dialogues (NPD) on integrated water resources management and water supply and sanitation are the main operational instrument of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI). This initiative, including its component for the countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), was launched at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. UNECE acts as strategic partner to support the policy dialogue process on integrated water resources management, and OECD on water supply and sanitation issues.
2. Since 2006, UNECE has been carrying out National Policy Dialogues in four countries: Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. These policy dialogues have been mainly financed by the European Commission.

I. OBJECTIVES AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

3. The dialogue process in EECCA countries deals with country specific themes. The focus is on assistance to strengthen integrated water resources management in line with the principles of the UNECE Water Convention, the Protocol on Water and Health, the EU Water Framework Directive and other UNECE and European Union instruments. It is important to note that the national dialogue process also builds on UNECE-led water programmes in the EECCA region.

4. The outcome of policy dialogues are so-called “policy packages” and include legislative acts, strategies, ministerial orders, and plans of implementation.
5. The dialogue process is usually conducted under the leadership of the Minister of Environment or the Chairman of the State Water Committee. In the respective countries, national Steering Committees are established, which comprise all relevant ministries (usually at the level of vice-ministers), agencies and institutions (including science and academia) and non-governmental organizations. As an important aim of the dialogue process is the implementation of policy packages, the involvement of representatives of Parliamentary bodies responsible for environmental issues is crucial in all countries. International organizations, such as EC, OECD, UNDP, OSCE, and WHO also participate in policy dialogue meetings.
6. In addition to its original function, the National Policy Dialogues and their Steering Groups also became a national coordination mechanism for water-related projects, carried out under the auspices of international organizations (e.g. EC and EC/Tacis, UNECE, UNDP, World Bank, OECD) and countries (e.g. Finland, Norway, Switzerland, and United States).

II. COUNTRY SPECIFIC THEMES

7. In Armenia, the National Policy Dialogue, which started in late 2006, facilitates the implementation of the principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM) in line with the EU Water Framework Directive and relevant conventions and other international agreements with an emphasis on financial issues. This includes pilot basin activities. Most recently, work started on a governmental action plan to achieve sustainable water management, safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation.
8. In Kyrgyzstan, the dialogue process started in mid-2008 and contributes to the strengthening of the IWRM framework in order to achieve sustainable use of water resources. Currently, it focuses on the setting-up of a River Basin Council for the Chu basin as well as on developing an action plan to achieve sustainable water management, safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation. At a later stage, the policy dialogue will also cover sustainable use of water resources taking into account climate change, the protection of water ecosystems and water-and-health issues. This will include transboundary issues, most notably in the Chu and Talas River basins.
9. In the Republic of Moldova, the National Policy Dialogue contributes to, and facilitates, the implementation of the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive and the UNECE Water Convention with a link to financing issues. New governmental regulations on wastewater discharges, plans for the establishment of river basin management authorities and river basin councils, and action plans to achieve sustainable water management, safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation have been drawn up and approved by the Government (or are in the phase of governmental approval).
10. In Ukraine, the dialogue process started in late 2007 and contributes to the strengthening of the legal, institutional and managerial frameworks so that water management authorities, river basin organizations and other water-related entities can increasingly cope with the challenges of climate change/variability. It also supports the development of reform and adaptation measures (e.g. adaptation of water management to climate change; safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation under

changing climates).

11. Table 1 illustrates the main countries' activities and the instruments and frameworks used.

Table 1: Main activities under the ongoing IWRM-related policy dialogues				
Instruments/frameworks	Armenia	Kyrgyzstan	Republic of Moldova	Ukraine
Water Framework Directive's principles	x			
Water Convention's principles	x		x	x
Protocol Water and Health		x	x	x
EU Urban Wastewater Directive			x	
Climate change adaptation (EU and UNECE instruments)				x
EU Flood Directive/UNECE instruments				x
Institutional frameworks (e.g. River Basin Councils)		x	x	

III. OUTPUTS OF THE DIALOGUE PROCESS

12. Outputs of these National Policy Dialogues are so-called policy packages as follows.

Legislative acts:

- Order of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on wastewater discharges from municipal sources, adopted on 10 October 2008;
- Draft order of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on the composition and work of river basin councils, finalized in October 2008 and circulated among governmental entities to prepare approval by the Government.

Ministerial orders:

- Draft Order of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Processing Industries of Kyrgyzstan on the composition and work of the River Basin Council for the Chu basin, examined at the first Steering Committee meeting in October 2008. The finalization is expected in the course of 2009.

Strategy documents:

- Draft strategy on the implementation of the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive in Armenia, which so far consists three interrelated policy packages:
 - Baseline conditions for integrated water resources management in the Marmarik River basin, adopted in March 2008;
 - Identification of desired conditions for water uses and functions in the Marmarik River basin, adopted in October 2008;
 - Identification of measures, outcome of public consultations and preliminary cost estimates, adopted in October 2008.

Plans of implementation:

- Plan of implementation of sustainable water management, safe drinking water and adequate sanitation (for the Republic of Moldova, adopted in June 2008; for Ukraine, adopted in April 2008; for Armenia and Kyrgyzstan in preparation).

Recommendations and good practice documents:

- Recommended practice for adaptation to climate change in water management in Ukraine, considered at Steering Group meetings in 2008. The finalization is expected in the course of 2009.

IV. FUTURE PROCESS

13. With all likelihood, the national policy dialogue process on integrated water resources management with UNECE as strategic partner will continue at least until 2012. The table below presents an indicative list of countries and the scheduling of activities.

Table 2: Indicative list of policy dialogues in EECCA in the period up to 2012								
Country	2009		2010		2011		2012	
Armenia								
Republic of Moldova								
Ukraine								
Kyrgyzstan								
Turkmenistan								
Tajikistan								
Azerbaijan								
Georgia								