



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Activities and Experiences of Estonia in the implementation of the Water Convention.

Harry Liiv

Special Envoy for Transboundary Waters, Ministry of the Environment, Republic of Estonia
Chair of the Water Convention

Tallinn, Estonia,
December, 2022

The implementation of the Water Convention- collaboration with neighbouring countries over shared resources

- The Water Convention indicated to main water management elements: quality, quantity, joint monitoring programs, Implementation through the development, adoption and implementation of relevant **water management plans** including legal, administrative, economic, financial and technical measures
- The Water Convention indicated to relevant joint commission working groups, we followed Convention working groups as IWRM and monitoring and assessment
- Water management safety issues we elaborated were based on Convention principles

Practical implementations

Minimum standards for appropriate measures

Requirements under Art. 3(1)	
Encourage low- and non-waste technology for prevention, control and reduction of pollutants (Art. 3(1)(a))	Depends on the economic development of the country, step by step approach
Prior licensing of waste-water discharges (Art. 3(1)(b))	It is a basic for water resource management Illegal discharges
Waste-water discharge limits based on BAT for hazardous substances (Art. 3(1)(c))	Depends on the economic development of the country, more and more in practise
Stricter requirements where receiving water/ecosystem requires (Art. 3(1)(d))	A special reason is needed e.g. ecology
At least biological treatment or equivalent applied to municipal waste water (Art. 3(1)(e))	Depends on the economic development of the country, it is Basic, step by step approach
BAT applied to reduce nutrient inputs from industrial and municipal sources (Art. 3(1)(f))	Depends on the economic development of the country, widespread approach

Practical implementations

*Minimum standards for appropriate measures

Requirements under Art. 3(1)	
Best environmental practices for diffuse sources, especially agriculture (Art. 3(1)(g))	Depends on the economic development of the country - buffer zones, good environmental practice
EIA and other means of assessment (Art. 3(1)(h))	Not always well practiced in transboundary cases
Sustainable water management, incl ecosystem approach promoted (Art. 3(1)(i))	Depends on the economic development of the country, important in case of rapid water demand
Contingency planning (Art. 3(1)(j))	Mostly applied for civil protection reasons , very rare in transboundary context
Specific measures for groundwater (Art. 2(1)(k))	Drinking water resource protection, remediation
Minimise risk of accidental pollution (Art. 3(1)(l))	Strong control at the installations

Lake Peipsi/ River Narva basin - transboundary waters



River Narva basin is a transboundary basin, shared between Estonia and Russia, small areas of it also extend to Latvia and to Belarus

Lake Peipsi



- Lake Peipsi is fourth largest lake in Europe and at the same time it is largest transboundary lake in Europe
- Total area of Lake Peipsi on its average water level is 3 555 km², 44 % of the lake is situated in Republic of Estonia and 56 % in Russian Federation
- Lake Peipsi is very good fish lake, important for Estonia and for Russia, 7000-8000 t fish per year, more than 12 valuable fish species.

River Narva

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



- River Narva is short river (77 km) but its quite affluent, its average water flow is $400 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$, yearly outflow is 12.5 km^3
- 85 % of the River Narva basin forms Lake Peipsi basin (including lake area). From tributaries the most important is River Pljussa on the territory of Russian Federation (its basin area is 6550 km^2 , mean water flow is $50 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$).

River Narva



- Narva River has energetic importance: on the river there is Narva hydroenergy plant which belongs to Russian Federation with total power 125 MW. On the Republic of Estonia there are two powerful heat energy plants with total power 2400 MW, water from River Narva is used for their system cooling purposes.
- Water uptake from River Narva is used for drinking water in Narva (which population is 70 000)



Basis for co-operation

- 1995-Estonia joined with the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes(Water Convention)
- 1997- Based on Water Convention-Agreement Between Republic of Estonia and Russian Federation on the Protection and Sustainable Use of Transboundary Watercourses were signed and also
- 1997- Joint Commission between Republic of Estonia and Russian Federation on the protection and sustainable use of transboundary was formed, today we have 2 working groups under this Commission

Implementation in Practice- Problems to be solved

The implementation of water management plans should become more coordinated, sub-targets must be harmonize, and continued funding for research and investment on both sides of the lake is essential; should not reduce / cut costs:

- 1.Regarding the monitoring of the state of the environment - monitoring provide information on the changes taking place in the state of the environment. Based on these, we can make decisions when developing more efficient water management measures. During last 20 years significant improvements in Lake Peipsi Water quality were observed.
- 2.For aid to agricultural farms (storage / storage / spreading of manure, manure, silage, chemicals).
This must be done in cooperation with farmers, ie the fieldbook and other techniques.
- 3.Promote the implementation of new technologies (integrated solutions supporting development are important, implementation of principles of sustainable development in the entire Lake Peipus river basin). We need to speed up with this.

Main achievements:

- Organisation of comprehensive co-operation, the same understanding of problems and the same targets
- Systematical exchange of information about situation in water management and water quality
- Approaching of principles and criteria about situation of water bodies
- Joint monitoring on Lake Peipsi and on Narva reservoir based on agreed monitoring programme
- Elaboration of water management plans in both side

Other concrete use of the Water Convention for Estonia:

- Convention gave to Estonia to be active and lead some Convention work areas, like
- Benefit of cooperation
- Benefits of cooperation - not only economical, but also environmental, cultural
- and social network
- Convention helped also to share knowledge about Estonian water worldwide, World Water Forums, World Water Development Report, Panel Water and Peace



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Thank you!

