

# **TOWARDS A NEW INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY RIVER BASINS, EXAMPLE IN EUROPE.**

## **Implementation of the Framework Directive 2000-2015**

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since 2000, with the water framework directive, and For the first time in history and in the world, twenty-nine european Countries are committed to jointly manage all their freshwater resources on a basin scale.

several european countries have already established, for a long time, a basin organization and signed agreements for transboundary river management and have created river basin commissions.

Transboundary cooperation in europe, balkans, caucasus and central asia is also highly facilitated by the UNECE – helsinki 1992 Water Convention on international watercourses.

Indeed, river basins are the relevant territories in which water runs on the soil or in the sub-soil, whatever are the national administrative limits or international boundaries crossed!.

Droughts, floods, pollution, water scarcity and climate change do not respect political or administrative boundaries and must be tackled at the river basin scale.

Because many of Europe's basins are shared – some 150 major rivers, 40 lakes and more than 100 aquifers in the unece region – addressing these challenges requires strong transboundary cooperation.

The EU Water Framework Directive, and its daughter directives on flooding and subterranean waters, are effective instruments for finding and implementing appropriate solutions – both within and across international borders.

IT especially inforces that the twenty Seven Member States and the candidates countries to accession to the European Union delimit « national and International water Districts », in which a « good ecological status » will have to be achieved before 2015.

This leads to a harmonization of practices and to the improvement of management tools between the EU COUNTRIES, including with the neighboring countries, in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe, riparian of common Transboundary waters!

The Framework Directive objective is the long term protection of the aquatic environments and water resources, to secure drinking water supply and meet all the economic needs in a sustainable manner.

Therefore, the objectives are both simple and very ambitious:

- stopping the deterioration of water resources,
- reducing the discharges of substances,
- and achieving a « good status » for water and aquatic environments.

But as everything is related at the basin level, the Directive cannot limit itself to the only issues of quality and conservation of the environments and must take simultaneously into account all the aspects of water and land management, navigation, flood and drought prevention, water transfers or hydropower production in particular...

The Directive proposes an overall approach, with a precise timetable, common methods and a progressive development of new tools.

### THE RELEVANT SCALE IS THE RIVER BASIN.

Europe is the continent where there is the greatest number of transboundary basins shared between at least two countries or more and up to heigten sharing the danube basin.

The Directive strengthens transboundary basin management.

The existing International commissions will be consolidated, new ones will be created.

### THE DIRECTIVE HAS SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS:

- ◆ It concerns all the environments: rivers, lakes, groundwater, coastal water, because they are interdependent,
- ◆ The Directive introduces a socioeconomic approach and firstly requires the identification of water uses and the assessment of the economic impact of these uses.
- IT requires a report on the recovery of the costs of services linked to water uses.

It introduces into the economic calculation not only the traditional investment and operating costs, but also new approaches, such as the calculation of opportunity costs between various uses of the resources and of the costs of the damage caused to the environment.

- ♦ The Directive requires the establishment of a common frame of references for assessment, allowing real analyses of the situations and strategies of the Member States. It is also a guarantee for transparency.

Quality indicators and reference values have now been defined for each type of « water body », allowing, for example, exchanges of data and comparisons between countries.

For each District, « management plans », defining the objectives to be achieved, and « programs of measures », defining the necessary actions, must be formulated before the end of 2009.

The Directive clearly stipulates that the water stakeholders must actively participate in all the steps of the management plan formulation.

Consultation of the general public has been required at the different steps of the process.

The first results obtained are positive and stimulating.

This does not mean that the European Water Framework Directive can be "exported" as an all to other countries.

The Directive itself is not universal, But its key elements are ...

The important thing to "export" is the process - the final shape varies from country to country.

Europe's experiences in basin management and transboundary cooperation offer many lessons that could be useful for other countries.

Mutual learning, cooperation and capacity building programmes should enable Europe to share its experiences and to learn from the experiences of other regions.

The European Union Water Initiative, initiated during the Summit of Johannesburg in 2002, includes a component on IWRM and transboundary cooperation in africa, latin america, central asia and the mediterranean.

For example, in Africa, Within this initiative and under AMCOW supervision, the situation of the African transboundary basins was analyzed in 2003 to identify the framework for action to be promoted and the pilot basins which could be used as a test of the new recommended approaches.

Part of the program could start, thanks to the European Water Facility for Africa and eu member states cooperations, and some outcomes are encouraging, such as those obtained in the Niger, Orange, senegal or Volta basins, etc.

the “Performance Indicators project for African Basin Organizations”, financed by the European Water Facility and france involve ten African river basins.

The “African Water Information System” , also funded by the eu water facility and france, will be developed and tested during three years in ten African pilot sectors before been extended to all Africa.

“TWINBASIN project” also funded by the eu and extended to fourty basin organizations around the world has proven that twinning arrangements facilitate direct links and useful exchange of field experiences between managers, technicians and representatives of local authorities and users.

The EU-China River Basin Management Programme is a joint project initiated by the European Commission and the Chinese Government, with the purpose to establish integrated river basin management practices in the Yellow and Yangtze River Basins.

The project is meant to be a dialogue platform bringing together leaders and staff of government agencies, and river basin authorities, from China and Europe, in order to exchange experience on best practices in the two regions.

the european experience may be also of some help to the central asia countries for facilitating the negotiation of better arrangements on a share management of the syr daria and amou daria rivers, within the EU Water initiative and the UNECE Convention framework.

The eu-water initiative in the mediterranean is dealing with many research projects on institutional tools allowing the implementation of some key elements of the water framework directive in the specific context of the region.

To conclude the european experience shows that Basin management and transboundary cooperation are necessary frames to implement IWRM, better manage flood/droughts and adapt to climate change.

To be successful, Basin Management and Transboundary Cooperation need full political support and have to pass from theoretical approaches into practical implementation.

the EU Water Framework Directive and the UNECE Water Convention implementation shows also the added- value that could have these kinds of institutional instruments.

Thank you for your attention.