

## « EUROPE INBO 2011 »

### 9th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE OPORTO (PORTUGAL) – 27 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION COORDINATED BY PROF. J. GANOULIS ON  
TRANSBOUNDARY AQUIFER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: IDENTIFY GOOD  
PRACTICES AND REPORT INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE 6<sup>TH</sup> WW FORUM

**6<sup>TH</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM, Marseille, France, 12-17 March 2012**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION (SD): 1. Ensure everyone's well being**

**Priority for Action (PfA): 1.5 Contribute to cooperation and peace**

**Target & Solution Group (TSG): 1.5.2** Increase the number of new agreements and revise/enhance the quality of existing agreements related to transboundary surface and/or groundwater

#### **SUMMARY OF TSG 1.5.2**

Bi- and multi-lateral agreements on transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifer water resources management are important tools for enhancing effective cooperation, involve political commitment and implement joint water management plans. Depending on the legal status of the riparian countries developing multilateral regional agreements could be of different degree of difficulty. For example in countries belonging to a unified legal system for water management, like the European Union (EU), the situation is facilitated by the application of common water directives (e.g the EU Water Framework Directive, EU-WFD). In federal states like USA and Canada developing such agreements may be more difficult as legal responsibility for water is distributed by constitution to the states. In centralised countries negotiations and legal issues for developing agreements could be performed more easily.

According to the previous experience of UNESCO Chair/INWEB (International Network of Water/Environment Centres for the Balkans, Prof. J. Ganoulis), TSG 1.5.2 coordinator, there are at least three main obstacles in developing and implementing multilateral agreements on shared water management: (1) lack of political willingness, (2) differences of socio-economic and cultural levels between riparian countries and (3) lack of trust and mutual interests, conflicting objectives and different priorities between countries, in relation to their history, sovereignty and possible territorial claims.

Although there are some good examples of bi- and multi-lateral agreements on transboundary river basins and aquifers, such as the Danube River Convention and the Guarani Aquifer Agreement, in many cases existing bi- or multi-lateral agreements on transboundary surface waters and shared groundwater aquifer systems are outdated, incomplete or obsolete. Many of them are not implemented in real terms or focus on very specific and particular issues, such as flood protection, navigation or hydroelectricity production, without referring to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Some are not in accordance with the principles of the international law on transboundary water resources or they don't rely on adequate national or common institutions and/or they are not based on common monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

There is therefore a need to increase the number of such agreements and to provide tools and methodologies in order to increase their quality and facilitate their implementation. This is the principal aim of the Target and Solutions Group (TSG) 1.5.2 in close consultation with its members and the Core Group (CG) 1.5 on Cooperation and Peace. In order to achieve this general objective the members of the TSG 1.5.2 will (a) first critically review existing bi- and multi-lateral agreements, (b) screen examples of case studies which have been proven as successes in the field, (c) examine the reasons of failures or incomplete agreements, (d) develop indicators for good practice and effective implementation of mutual agreements and (e) enhance the dialogue and consultation between members and stakeholders of the group in order to identify solutions, tools and methodologies for developing new agreements and/or improve the quality of the existing ones.

THOSE INTERESTED TO REPORT PLEASE FILL UP THE ATTACHED FORMS