

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
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**23<sup>RD</sup> ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

**“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security  
and stability through co-operation”**

**Prague, 14-16 September 2015**

**CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY**

OFFICE OF THE CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES  
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# **Executive Summary**

## **23<sup>rd</sup> ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

### **“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”**

#### **CONCLUDING MEETING**

**Prague, 14 - 16 September 2015**

#### **Introduction**

The Concluding Meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) on “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation” took place in Prague, Czech Republic, on 14-16 September 2015. Seven thematic areas were addressed during the three-day meeting:

- The benefits of good water governance across different levels
- Water governance at national level – best practices and new approaches in the OSCE region
- Water governance and co-operation at transboundary level: lessons learnt for water diplomacy
- Water governance and sustainable development
- Facilitating effective water governance in the context of new environmental challenges
- Governing waters for effective disaster risk reduction
- Strengthening participation and awareness raising for effective water governance

A session devoted to the possible follow-up to the 23<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum concluded the event.

More than 250 participants, including official representatives of OSCE participating States, OSCE field operations, as well as experts from international, regional and non-governmental organizations, the business community and academia attended the meeting and engaged in the discussions.

The CiO and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, H.E. Ivica Dacic opened the event with H.E. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic and Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE.

The two keynote speeches as well as many other interventions during the Concluding Forum emphasized the urgency and relevance for the OSCE to step up its activities on water governance as well as climate change adaptation.

The review report by the UNECE on the “Implementation of OSCE Commitments in the Field of Water Governance” provided a comprehensive overview and a set of recommendations for further engagement.

Several participants highlighted that the OSCE’s comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and its experience in addressing environmental challenges provides the right basis for the Organization’s further engagement in the field of water governance

It was underlined that the OSCE is a recognized platform for dialogue where security implications of global, regional, national and local water related challenges can be discussed. It was also emphasized that the OSCE should co-operate and co-ordinate with other specialized organizations active in the field of Water Governance.

## REPORTS OF THE RAPPORTEURS

### Opening Plenary Session

**Moderator:** Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Rapporteur:** Ms Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Advisor, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

### Welcoming remarks:

- H.E. Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic
- H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, OSCE

### Keynote speeches:

- H. E. Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
- H.E. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

### Selected topics:

- Good water governance as a response to increasing water challenges
- Water governance as a tool to increase resilience to environmental challenges and disasters

*H.E. Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic*, welcomed the timely and important topic of water governance. He reminded that there is no life without water and pointed out that water could be a reason for conflicts and be used as strategic weapon. Water governance has always been a major factor in local, regional and global security. He underlined that uneven distribution of water is compounded by climate change, and that water co-operation at all levels is of vital importance. Since the Czech Republic is an upstream country and very prone to floods, it is highly devoted to co-operation, in particular within the frameworks of international commissions for Elbe, Odra and Danube Rivers. The efficiency of the long-term co-operation in these frameworks has been increasing with the development of information sharing technologies. He also stressed the indispensable role the International Organizations play in this matter.

*H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, OSCE*, referred to the Sendai World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the development of the Sustainable Development Goals and the

upcoming UNFCCC COP21 in Paris that provided unparalleled opportunities for concerted action with partners related to water governance. He underlined three key points: (1) Water is a strategic resource and essential element of national and regional security, which is under stress and needs increased focus. (2) Water is a common good and governing water resources in transboundary context requires mechanisms that are equitable but adapted to specific context, taking local conditions into account. (3) OSCE pS have the advantage of a legally binding convention – the UNECE Water Convention. He stressed that the OSCE is well placed to support pS in good water governance, on such issues as inter-sectoral co-ordination, transparent and accountable decision-making, stakeholder participation, data sharing, and sound regulatory frameworks. The Secretary General also underlined the importance of involving local communities in water management, a topic where the OSCE Secretariat, field operations and Aarhus Centres were already engaged. He underlined that the OSCE would continue to support good water governance, in close partnership with other international stakeholders. With regard to the global agenda, the speaker stressed the links between the Sustainable Development Goals and the upcoming UNFCCC COP21 in Paris. He noted that the OSCE could engage further in areas such as water, climate change, energy, land degradation and disaster risk reduction, as well as gender equality, promotion of inclusive societies and many others. Finally, he appreciated the co-operation and partnerships which the OSCE had built in the field of water governance with a number of international organizations, including in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC).

*H.E. Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia*, highlighted the potential of the Economic and Environmental Dimension and the need to increase collective efforts in the Dimension. Referring to the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, he stated that the Economic and Environmental Forum process was an excellent example of how OSCE's comprehensive approach to security contributes to rebuilding trust and confidence. He noted that by bringing together a wide array of different stakeholders, the Forum facilitated the exchange of ideas and practical experiences on the most pressing economic and environmental issues affecting the OSCE region. He underlined that water was not a new topic for the OSCE, but that there was a need for greater political engagement, increased co-operation, and a better understanding of its complex connections with security. H.E. Ivica Dacic stressed that the Serbian Chairmanship was focusing on promoting dialogue and co-operation on good water governance through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned at all levels – transboundary, national, and local. He underlined that good water governance should also include a gender and youth perspective to maximize environmental, social and economic benefits while contributing to increased security in the OSCE region. As the largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE could make a tangible contribution to security and prosperity by tackling contemporary challenges like water governance. He underlined the timeliness of this in light of the upcoming adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UN conference on climate change in Paris. He announced that Serbia would start working towards a comprehensive Ministerial Council Decision on this topic. He concluded by reminding about the need for an integrated and cross-dimensional approach and co-operation among participating States, as well as with other international organizations, the private sector and civil society.

*H.E. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs*, underlined the great importance Switzerland attached to the Economic and Environmental Dimension and its commitment to strengthening it. Water and security figured highly on the Swiss

foreign policy agenda as a strategic contribution to peace and security. He reminded that water crises were perceived as major security risks, but stressed that water could also be a powerful source for co-operation. The latter notion was at the heart of Swiss water diplomacy and should also guide the discussion of OSCE's role. Due to changing consumption patterns, population growth, raise in water use, climate change and pollution, water management was facing unprecedented challenges. It was noted that water is at the core of sustainable development; but it is also a security issue that could fuel conflicts, exacerbated by climate change. H.E. Didier Burkhalter referred to examples of water conflicts and of water used as a weapon of war, as could be seen during the Syrian crisis. Therefore, it was important to engage to ensure role of water as an instrument for peace and not a source of crisis. To highlight the potential for co-operation, he pointed to the example of an irrigation scheme used by opposing factions in Syria, where opponents who were fighting during daylight, sat together and negotiated a fair quota of water in the evening.

Further on, the speaker introduced the lines of action on "water and security", recently developed by the Swiss foreign ministry, making the case for a comprehensive approach when addressing the nexus of water and security. He also referred to Switzerland's engagement in so-called "Blue Diplomacy" since 2009, building on the experience and expertise Switzerland had in transboundary water co-operation, for instance in the Rhine basin. Switzerland's activities included the development of new mechanisms for water-policy negotiation and co-ordination in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, introduction of Integrated Water Management in Central Asia, and the appointment of a special envoy for water in Central Asia in order to facilitate interstate dialogue. He informed that Switzerland would launch, together with partner States, a Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace in Geneva in November. He stressed that strengthening the OSCE's portfolio in water diplomacy and sustainable water management was a joint priority of the consecutive Swiss and Serbian OSCE Chairmanships. He stated that the OSCE has built a strong track record on supporting participating States in fostering good and joint water governance, but more could and should be done. He mentioned three reasons why Switzerland considered the OSCE a vital actor and multiplier in water governance:

(1) OSCE know-how in co-operative security and its comprehensive approach linking the environment and security were of great value when it comes to water governance. The OSCE could act as a facilitator and political platform, and could also bring in its own expertise. He referred to the examples of developing legal frameworks for water governance between Moldova and Ukraine, and between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and OSCE's regional training workshop on gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution in Central Asia's water governance.

(2) The OSCE has partnerships with other institutions that have in-depth knowledge in water governance, such as the UNECE. Many water-related projects of the OSCE have taken place within the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). He pointed to the transboundary climate change adaptation strategy that Ukraine and Moldova endorsed this year for the Dniester basin, which had been facilitated by the OSCE and UNECE, and encouraged more such joint initiatives to follow.

(3) The OSCE is close to the people and has a strong presence on the ground. The OSCE works with civil society and many of its field operations have played important roles in promoting water co-operation, like the OSCE Office in Tajikistan in facilitating transboundary water co-operation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, or the OSCE presence in Albania and OSCE Secretariat in training Aarhus Centres on how they could foster public participation in transboundary water management in South Eastern Europe. Switzerland regarded the almost 60 OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres in 14 participating States as useful

platforms to engage citizens, governments and the private sector in a dialogue on environmental challenges.

H.E. Didier Burkhalter also commended the OSCE for its efforts to mitigate the serious water supply crisis in the conflict-affected regions in Ukraine. In concluding, he encouraged participating States to support the OSCE efforts to foster security through co-operative water governance and to promote water as an issue for the Belgrade Ministerial Council.

The floor was opened for statements from the Delegations.

*A representative of the European Union*, together with the aligned countries (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino), underlined that sustainable water management could be an important factor to preserve peace, security and stability, and that water scarcity, climate change, droughts and floods could contribute to tensions and conflicts. Depriving people access to water and sanitation was depriving them of basic human rights. He stated that the EU attached great importance to regional and transboundary water co-operation, and encouraged regional and international co-operation, as a concrete objective of EU water diplomacy. He highlighted that international agreements on water co-operation, including the UN and UNECE Water Conventions were important instruments to promote the integrated management of transboundary water resources. He stated that the OSCE, as a regional security organization was well placed to play a role in facilitating and enhancing dialogue and co-operation and thus contributing to increasing trust and confidence. He emphasized the growing relevance of water governance and water diplomacy in particular in Central Asia and encouraged the countries to engage in dialogue and co-operation on this issue. He appreciated that the meeting would try to explore the linkages water governance has with sustainable development and environmental challenges stemming from climate change, also referring to the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030. Finally, the representative expressed his hope that the meeting would contribute to a possible Ministerial Council Decision in the area of water governance.

*A representative of the Russian Federation* stressed the need to increase transboundary co-operation, reinforce water management capacities at all levels, improve efficiency, and strengthen regional and sub-regional mechanisms between neighbouring countries, including through the resources and work of the OSCE Secretariat. She underlined that water deficit should not only be seen as a source of conflict, but water should be considered a catalyst for international co-operation. Exchange of experience could not only contribute to a better environment, but could also positively affect broader relations between countries. She stated that the OSCE is a useful platform for dialogue among participating States and finding new opportunities even if States may have different approaches, and the OSCE could make its own contribution without duplication efforts of other international organizations.

*A representative of Turkey* stressed the importance of bolstering and reinforcing the Second Dimension of the OSCE. He acknowledged the role of the OSCE as a significant platform to discuss various aspects of water governance, such as capacity building and enhancement, ensuring greater participation of women and youth, and the link between DRR and water governance. He reminded that water resources and the ecosystems that sustain them were under threat. Since water was a vital yet limited resource and one of the essential factors of sustainable development, all countries should introduce effective management and establish strong institutions for good water governance, which requires a participatory, co-operative and holistic approach at all levels. Since Turkey was located in the region vulnerable to

climate change, it was committed to manage water in an efficient manner. Turkey considered water as a bridge-builder and its transboundary water policy was based on the principles of equitable, reasonable and optimal usage in the best interest of riparian states. Since every basin had peculiarities, transboundary water issues should be handled first and foremost by the riparian countries.

*A representative of the Holy See* referred to Pope Francis's Environmental Encyclical, which stated that access to drinking water was crucial. The Catholic Church taught that water could not be treated as commodity, but should be considered as a public good and used rationally and in solidarity. He stressed that the right to water was a universal right. Given the urgency of the problem, the search for solutions should not be limited to statements and should not neglect thorny issues, but take urgent action to protect human life, including fostering co-operation, technology transfer, measures against corruption and pollution, and establishing regional and transboundary bodies. Finally, he expressed hope to find sustainable solutions as soon as possible, in particular for the most vulnerable groups and next generations.

*A representative of Belarus* stressed the importance of the topic and welcomed the opportunity to exchange views on best practices related to water governance, analyze the impact of climate change on water resources and discuss the contribution of the OSCE. The representative stated that Belarus was in favour of stepping up efforts of the participating States in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. Social and economic development and environmental protection were relevant to every individual, and further efforts of the OSCE could contribute to sustainable development and stability. He expressed his hope that the Forum would become an important milestone in the preparations for the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Belgrade in December.

*A representative of Uzbekistan* stated that efficient water management was crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He pointed to the risks and potential disasters associated with huge water infrastructure and the impacts of the Aral Sea crisis as major environmental disaster in the region. The worsening environmental situation and food security were major issues in the region. Through modernization of infrastructure, proper water management and agricultural diversification, Uzbekistan had managed to reduce water collection by more than 20 per cent. The representative also referred to the international conference on the Aral Sea disaster in Urgench in October 2014. Uzbekistan would be looking forward to a constructive approach to transboundary water management, based on the following main directions: (1) water usage should be based on the relevant international norms, (2) joint mitigation of negative impacts of the Aral Sea disaster, (3) strengthening of monitoring systems of transboundary waters, (4) modern water technology for irrigation and drinking water supply.

*A representative of Armenia* appreciated the link of the topic of the 22<sup>nd</sup> EEF - disaster risk reduction - with water governance. He welcomed the elaborated discussions on water governance during the preparatory meetings, particularly on the transboundary context and DRR, which also pointed to the comparative advantage of the OSCE as a security organization that could bring added value to the discussions of water co-operation. He expressed his expectations that the Forum should identify the way forward, including through new commitments, in water governance. He stated that Armenia saw the OSCE as a political organization that deals with sensitive issues, well placed to assist pS in transboundary co-operation. He welcomed the emphasis on water governance at transboundary level and water diplomacy from the angle of possible OSCE involvement. Also when difficulties of

political nature prevented direct bilateral or multilateral action, the OSCE could address water governance and DRR issues. OSCE's involvement in the ENVSEC Initiative provided important points of reference, as well as the OSCE experience in dispatching fact finding missions. Climate change assessment and mitigation could create a de-politicized agenda among States. He urged OSCE pS not to try to resolve water scarcity in transboundary basins by unilateral actions. Water should also not be used as unilateral coercive measure.

*A representative of Spain* commended the Chairmanship for choosing the theme of water governance. Spain viewed this topic as crucial, also due to its own geographical and climate situation. She referred to the headquarters of the UN Water Decade in Zaragoza, and stressed that Spain would continue to contribute to water-related activities of the OSCE, which could bring added value. Spanish experience could be of interest for other pS, in particular with regard to integrated river basin management, natural disasters and transboundary co-operation, and water confederations which are independent bodies including also civil society and regional authorities. With regard to transboundary co-operation, the representative mentioned the strong co-operation between Spain and Portugal based on the Albufeira Convention of 1998. In the Mediterranean, Spain initiated in March 2015 jointly with Algeria the Western Mediterranean Initiative which identified improving water management as key priority. It will be followed by an action plan and a road map for implementation until the end of this year. She concluded by underlining Spain's full commitment to promote access to drinking water as a basic human right.

*A representative of the United States of America* stressed that for the OSCE, as an organization focused on security, it was important to examine how it could increase security by preparing for, mitigating, and responding to challenges related to water, since poor water governance could create instability and increase regional tensions. However, water problems also represented opportunities to promote cross-border co-operation and stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship. The representative referred to the ten-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, and the lessons learnt from such experiences:

(1) Governments must work together. During the recovery after Hurricane Katrina, partnership among different government agencies and jurisdictions led to a model of effective co-operation. Also internationally, co-operation on water governance required similar levels of co-operation and political will. Referring to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the Columbia River Treaty with Canada, the representative stressed the importance of patience, sustained support, and dedication to achieving results. He stressed that across the OSCE region, co-operation between the pS, national and local governments, and communities was essential and that the upcoming discussions could determine which role the OSCE could play to support more effective co-operation.

(2) The representative also pointed to the need to actively promote economic opportunities to improve water governance through innovation and entrepreneurship. He challenged all delegations and OSCE missions to play an active part in promoting these opportunities.

(3) He also stressed the increased number of extreme weather events due to climate change and consequently the need to make better use of natural infrastructure, like wetlands, and ensuring that man-made infrastructure could adapt to a wide range of possible conditions. He suggested to explore how the OSCE could assist in this effort and expressed his appreciation of the upcoming OSCE Security Days conference on "Climate Change and Security."

The representative welcomed the fact that transparency and anti-corruption, which was an indispensable part of any dialogue on good governance, would be discussed during the Forum. Corruption could multiply losses from natural disasters and pose threats to neighbouring countries. Finally, the representative asked the Co-ordinator, in addition to

providing a general summary of this Forum, to keep track on specific elements that could be part of the practical steps undertaken in the OSCE and by its participating States to be included in a potential Ministerial Decision. He called on the Secretariat, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and the Conflict Prevention Center to explore the creation of a series of table-top exercises that could examine possible water-related risk scenarios, such as droughts and floods, and identify actions and specific OSCE tools that could be employed.

*A representative of Tajikistan* underlined the crucial importance of water governance for sustainable development, security and stability. Access to water was important, especially with regard to climate change and increased demand. The topic was important for Central Asia, where most water was used for agriculture, but also energy production was dependent on water, in particular in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. He outlined the following key aspects of water and security in Central Asia: (1) the unequal distribution and usage of water in the region and the resulting conflicts of interests between upstream and downstream states, (2) limited water availability, decreasing due to climate change, (3) increasing demand for water due to population growth and economic development, (4) the continuing deterioration of the Aral Sea, related to inefficient irrigation, (5) and, most important, the insufficient regional co-operation to solve the water problems. Tajikistan was willing to co-operate with all interested parties, in particular its neighbouring countries, in mutual interests. He referred to the international water initiatives of the President of Tajikistan, such as the International Year of Water Co-operation and several high level events. He reminded that for Tajikistan, water usage problems could not be discussed without considering energy issues due to the role of hydropower and its potential for the whole region. He stated that hydropower development should be part of measures taken to reduce the use of fossil fuels, foster renewable energy and improve green economy, and thereby could contribute to sustainable development in the whole region.

## Review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of water governance

**Moderator:** Ambassador Dejan Šahović, Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

**Rapporteur:** Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

### Speakers:

- Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak, Acting Director of Environment Division, UNECE
- Ms. Sonja Koepfel, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, UNECE

*Ambassador Dejan Šahović, Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force* opened the session underlining that the concluding meeting of the EEF in Prague provided an opportunity to benefit from the results of the review of implementation of commitments of the OSCE participating States. In 2015, the review process was carried out by UNECE which is one of OSCE's close partners in water related issues and is the main organization in charge of developing tools and strategies for transboundary water governance. Ambassador Šahović indicated that for more than a decade, the OSCE and UNECE, together with other partners, have been co-operating in the framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative to address environmental challenges related to security.

*Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak, Acting Director of Environment Division, UNECE*, reminded participating States that from 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York, the world leaders were expected to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *Mr. Ludwiczak* emphasized that this framework is based on 5 pillars, 17 goals and 169 targets which promised to pave the way for the eradication of poverty and hunger and for promoting peace and prosperity in a healthy environment for future generations. He noted that water is key for sustainable development as emphasized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The speaker specified that amongst the 17 Sustainable Developments Goals, goal number 6 and in particular its target 6.5 recognized that water governance was crucial for achieving all water-related targets. He also mentioned that the new 2030 Agenda contained a call for transboundary water co-operation noting that 60% of the world's freshwater courses cross borders and more than 50% of the population in the European and Asian parts of ECE region live within shared river basins. He specified that any response to existing or emerging water challenges including equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, water efficiency and sustainability, prevention and control of transboundary water pollution and related ecosystems, but also climate change adaptation requires co-operation between stakeholders across borders. In this regard, *Mr. Ludwiczak* underlined the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) which provides the necessary legal and intergovernmental framework for transboundary water co-operation and for promotion of good water governance. He also noted that the Water Convention itself is a testimony of excellent co-operation between the

UNECE and OSCE. The speaker emphasized that water is frequently a source for co-operation underlining the work which was done by the UNECE and OSCE leading up to the Sava agreement and establishment of the Sava River Commission between the countries in South-Eastern Europe after the devastating war. He also provided an example on how the OSCE together with the UNECE have been providing support to governments in response to water challenges in the framework of the ENVSEC Initiative, for example, by establishing legal and institutional frameworks. In particular, on the Chu and Talas River Basin in Central Asia the OSCE and UNECE, together with other organizations, have supported the establishment of the river basin commission which still remains the only bilateral commission in Central Asia. Referring to the floods in the Sava basin last year, Mr. *Ludwiczak* indicated that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction also included provision on transboundary co-operation in disaster risk reduction. He underlined that OSCE and UNECE, together with other ENVSEC partners clearly demonstrated how this co-operation could be implemented on the ground by applying tools and methodologies that supported climate change adaptation and improved resilience to environmental risks in shared basins. He provided the example of the joint OSCE-UNECE project on “Climate Change and Security in the Dniester River Basin” that supported the development of a climate change vulnerability assessment as well as of a transboundary adaptation strategy, which is currently being implemented through concrete measures on the ground. Furthermore, the project supports the transboundary cooperation by providing a platform for cooperation and information exchange between the riparian countries. Furthermore, Mr. *Ludwiczak* emphasized that disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities have also been implemented by the network of 59 Aarhus Centres supported by the OSCE in 14 countries, by acting as a catalyst in promoting democracy and good governance, including good water governance as well as in advancing the implementation of the principles of the UNECE Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. It was also noted that increasing public awareness, disseminating information and engaging public and civil society in the decision making could help to mitigate the risks associated with natural disasters and could assist in adapting the long-term effects of natural disasters and adapt to climate change. Mr. *Ludwiczak* suggested that the OSCE, together with its OSCE field operations should continue to reinforce the capacities of Aarhus Centres related to good governance at different levels and should strengthen networking of Aarhus Centres within and across borders in shared river basins. Mr. *Ludwiczak* also identified a number of opportunities for further co-operation between the UNECE and the OSCE in the field of water governance, underlining that organizations could further enhance synergies to promote the benefits of transboundary water co-operation, to accelerate climate change adaptation and to promote co-operation on the ground. In this respect, he mentioned the example of the Dniester River Basin, which can be replicated to other basins interested to develop climate change adaptation strategies. In conclusion Mr. *Ludwiczak* informed participating States about the upcoming seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention, which planned to be held on 17-19 November, 2015 in Budapest and encouraged distinguished delegates to attend this important meeting.

*Ms. Sonja Koepfel, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, UNECE* presented the report on the review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of water governance. She highlighted that without proper water governance there would be increased competition for water between sectors and an escalation of water crises of various kinds which could trigger emergencies in a range of water dependent sectors. She noted that more than 150 rivers and lakes were shared by two or more of the 57 OSCE participating States. *Ms.*

*Koepfel* presented several definitions of water governance and the principles that form the basis of good water governance and emphasised the importance of the Sustainable Development Goal 6, entirely dedicated to the water topic, of the target 6.5 as well as of the target 6b which foresees strengthening of public participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management. .” *Ms. Koepfel* encouraged participating States to use other international frameworks and processes in supporting water governance, highlighting here the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses entered into force in 2014, the Aarhus Convention, Espoo Convention (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context), the SEA Protocol at regional level and identified in particular the special role European Union was attaching to this matter. *Ms. Koepfel* identified required elements for improving water governance amongst which she highlighted: participatory decision making; delivering water supply and sanitation services in an affordable, accountable and sustainable manner; creating regulatory frameworks and promoting knowledge transfer and skills development, as well as the cross-sectorial co-ordination and co-operation. The speaker briefly spoke about the 1992 UNECE Water Convention and emphasised the advancement of transboundary co-operation in the OSCE region. *Ms. Koepfel* presented the OSCE forum processes devoted to and the documents that focused on the water or related topics, and with regards to the implementation of the OSCE commitments by the OSCE participating States, she noted that there was significant increase in ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) amongst the participating States. She emphasised the importance that the OSCE participating States negotiated new transboundary agreements like Moldova – Romania, the Memorandum of Understanding on the (Drin River. She indicated that substantial number of participating States made progress in public availability of information on water as well as on the river basin management. The speaker informed the distinguished delegates that the OSCE participating States updated some existing agreements amongst which were the Albufeira Convention (Spain and Portugal) and US-Mexico agreement. *Ms. Koepfel* presented a number of challenges regarding water governance in the OSCE region amongst which were: major gaps in the extent to which the river basin management approach was applied; huge lack of capacities and resources; difficulties in addressing new challenges such as climate change. The speaker highlighted that OSCE supports participating States in addressing these challenges, such as for example the support offered, in partnership with UNECE, to the riparian countries of the Kura River (Azerbaijan and Georgia) with drafting a transboundary river agreement.

In conclusion, *Ms Koepfel* listed a number of concrete recommendations to the OSCE. The report called for the OSCE to:

1. Increase support for Good Water Governance including effective inter-sectoral co-ordination at local and national levels, transparent and accountable decision-making processes, stakeholder participation, data and information sharing, and sound regulatory frameworks;
2. Expand activities on water diplomacy, e.g. by enabling a discussion platform among water, foreign and security policy communities in order to increase understanding of water conflicts and develop strategic and practical solutions, as needed, in co-operation with partners;
3. Strengthen work, with international organizations e.g. with UNECE, to facilitate transboundary water co-operation in specific basins including through support for developing and implementing legal and institutional frameworks;

4. Make increased use of environmental co-operation, including in the area of water, as a tool in diminishing tensions as part of a broader effort to prevent conflict, build mutual confidence and promote good neighborly relations;
5. Further strengthen support for public participation and transparency, especially through Aarhus Centres which need more support and should be better linked;
6. Support accession to and implementation of MEAs, such as Water Convention;
7. Support participating States in implementation of water-related SDGs, as relevant;
8. Together with UNECE further support transboundary co-operation in climate change adaptation and support implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
9. Invest more in educating young generations on how to govern water more wisely, and strengthen its collaboration with youth organizations;
10. Strive to promote a gender perspective in its activities related to water governance and water diplomacy;
11. Continue to co-operate on water-related activities with other international and regional organizations active in this area, including through ENVSEC.

*Ambassador Šahović* thanked UNECE for their report underlining that recommendations provided by the speakers would be an excellent food for thought especially taking into account upcoming Ministerial Council meeting in Belgrade. *Ambassador Šahović* also indicated the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlighting target 6.5 on water governance and asked Mr. *Ludwiczak* about the role that the OSCE could play in this regard.

*Mr. Ludwiczak* noted that in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the OSCE together with the UNECE should be ready to co-operate and work together in order to assist participating States in complying with their commitments emphasizing the importance of transboundary water co-operation between the participating States.

The floor was opened for discussion.

*The representative of Austria* pointed out that there still were water governance challenges in Central Asia and inquired about the UNECE experience in addressing this issue.

*Ms Koepfel* highlighted that for a number of years UNECE together with the OSCE worked in Central Asia on the basis of the UNECE Water Convention, on a number of technical issues, including dam safety, water quality issues and data exchange programs. She noted that transboundary relations were often difficult to deal with and therefore she suggested initiating discussions on a technical level first in order to start consultations on a higher political level.

*The representative of Finland* asked about the relations between the UN 1997 Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the 1992 UNECE Water Convention and its added value to the OSCE region.

*Ms Koepfel* noted that the UN Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses entered into force in 2014 and it is a complementary framework to the UNECE Water Convention. With regard to the OSCE, *Ms Koepfel* noted that two conventions were based on the main principles of the international water law and OSCE was

already, together with its partners, promoting these principles through different projects and activities on the ground.

*Session I: The benefits of good water governance across different levels*

**Moderator:** Ambassador Thierry B chet, Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OSCE

**Rapporteur:** Ms Dana Bogdan, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Eugene Z. Stakhiv**, lecturer and researcher at John Hopkins University, and visiting scholar at the US Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, United States
- **Mr. Ahmet Saatci**, President, Turkish Water Institute
- **Ms. Aziza Akhmouch**, Head - Water Governance Programme, Regional Development Policy Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD
- **Mr. Massimo Cozzone**, Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- **Mr. Gazmend Turdiu**, Deputy Secretary General, Regional Co-operation Council

*Ambassador Thierry B chet* opened the session and encouraged speakers and the audience to look more into the practical aspects of good water governance, to explore how the objectives of the Concluding Meeting of the Forum could be translated into practical steps. He underlined the value of sharing experiences from different parts of the world in this session, with a focus on which things can work in the context of the OSCE.

*Mr. Eugene Stakhiv* presented the benefits of good water governance across different levels from a practitioner’s perspective. He started by sharing a few observations on the roles and responsibilities of countries in the water sector, including policy-making and implementation, operational management as well as regulation and enforcement. *Mr. Stakhiv* noted that water resources management and ‘governance’ are inherently concerned with water security. The speaker referred to several definitions of ‘water governance’ as put forth by different international institutions and pointed to the distinct differences between developing and developed nations with regard to the Sustainable Development and the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Goals, from a water governance perspective. *Mr. Stakhiv* presented a list of necessary conditions required for effective national IWRM, emphasizing the need for consistent project planning and evaluation guidelines as well as effective regulatory and institutional enforcement infrastructure. Speaking on the transboundary development agenda, he emphasized that river basin commissions have a diplomatic function in the context of relations between the riparian states. In concluding his presentation, *Mr. Stakhiv* referred to activities implemented by the OSCE and mentioned the need for defining an effective organizational model for the future Dniester River Basin Commission to be established by the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. He also noted that, when developing this Commission’s model, there are several examples around the world that could serve as stimulating examples in this case.

*Mr. Ahmet Saatci* outlined the sectoral water uses in the world and in Turkey and presented the Regional Development Projects (RDPs) implemented in Turkey based on the water-food-energy –ecosystems nexus. *Mr. Saatci* gave an overview on the water withdrawals by sectors in the country and referred to the current and future water use in Turkey for each main economic sector. Within the next decade, the water use for agricultural purposes is projected to decrease while the drinking water and industry sectors will slightly increase their share. The speaker touched upon the share of hydropower in electricity production and mentioned that from the perspective of the level of water stress, Turkey is estimated to be among the 30 most water stressed countries in the world within the next 25 years. *Mr. Saatci* noted the efforts undertaken by authorities in the field of water governance and presented the Regional Development Projects (RDPs) designed to decrease regional socioeconomic inequalities by utilizing available natural and financial sources. In particular, *Mr. Saatci* touched upon the Konya Basin Regional Development Project (KOP), the Thrace Regional Development Project (TRAGEP), the East Black Sea Development Project (DOKAP) or the East Anatolia & South Anatolia Basin Regional Development Project (GAP) in the context of the water-irrigation/Food – energy – ecosystems nexus.

*Ms. Aziza Akhmouch* presented the OECD Principles on Water Governance and shared the OECD projections regarding the increasing global water demand and water stress by river basin. She stressed that water crisis should be understood as a governance crisis and solutions should not be sought in a one-size-fits-all response but rather in overarching principles. *Ms. Akhmouch* emphasized that the water sector is a fragmented sector, sensitive to multilevel governance, and mentioned the importance of understanding the actors, their activities and levels of involvement. She outlined the OECD Water Governance Initiative which is based on a multi-stakeholder and bottom-up approach and referred to the OECD Principles on Water Governance developed within the framework of this Initiative. She then went on to identify the three main groups for these principles, including effectiveness, efficiency, as well as trust and engagement. *Ms. Akhmouch* noted that 65 Major Groups committed to these principles during the 7th World Water Forum (South Korea, April 2015). In concluding her intervention, *Ms. Akhmouch* outlined the next OECD steps for implementation for the period 2015 - 2017 including the launch of an on-line database for scaling up good practices for each principle and several seminars and regional consultations with the stakeholders for outreach and dissemination of information.

*Mr. Massimo Cozzone* provided a brief overview of the draft programme of work of the UNECE Water Convention for 2016-2018, noting the long-term partnership between the OSCE and the UNECE Water Convention in many of the activities undertaken within the Water Convention. He focused in particular on the two areas in the programme of work: water-food-energy ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins and the benefits of transboundary water co-operation. *Mr. Cozzone* mentioned that water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus assessments not only aim at fostering transboundary co-operation but also contribute to good water governance in several ways, including improved sectoral resource management, optimized use of infrastructures, early sharing of information and consultation on plans, and informing cooperation, policy and decisions for reconciling different resource uses. He outlined the dynamics and modalities for undertaken nexus assessments, including their reliance on a participatory approach. *Mr. Cozzone* identified nexus-related activities one of the areas where there could be potential for co-operation with the OSCE.

With regard to the assessment of benefits of transboundary water co-operation, *Mr. Cozzone* mentioned that this exercise supports governments and other actors in comprehending the broad range of benefits generated by transboundary water co-operation. In concluding his intervention, *Mr. Cozzone* shared two suggestions on the role the OSCE could play in this area. These include the promotion of application of the Policy Guidance Note on benefits transboundary river basins in the OSCE area as well as defining the level of ambition of the benefit assessment, selection of methodologies, involvement of stakeholders and strategies for communicating the results to be adapted to characteristics of the transboundary co-operation process.

*Mr. Gazmend Turdiu* presented the South East Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020): developed by the Regional Co-operation Council (RCC) and modelled after the Europe 2020 strategy.. He noted that SEE 2020 is an instrument for moving regional co-operation to a new phase and promoting European integration in South East Europe. He presented a brief overview on the nexus-related overall objectives and mentioned the launching of a political process of co-operation in SEE in transboundary water resource management, the advancement of the water-energy-food nexus approach at national and transboundary levels as well as the commencement of a Regional Integral Water Management Framework Agreement as main goals. Presenting the RCC's activities in the field, *Mr. Turdiu* mentioned that the RCC foresees a Regional Project on the nexus to enhance water- energy-food security and sustainable management of water/ other natural resources for sustainable growth. The speaker mentioned that the project encompasses national as well as regional and transboundary actions which include identifying trade-offs hampering water-food-energy security and development potential and the potential benefits to be shared among sectors and among different economies.

The floor was then opened for discussion.

*A representative of Armenia* thanked the speakers for a dynamic session and posed a question to *Mr. Ahmet Saatci*. He referred to the regional development projects, in particular the project in Eastern Anatolia, which includes the Ara(k)s River and the Ara(k)s River Basin. He expressed a concern that the project might reduce the water available for irrigation in Armenia's part of the basin and noted the importance of transboundary consultations in this regard. He also inquired whether potential repercussions of the project for the riparian countries had been calculated by the Turkish Water Institute and whether the OSCE could have a role to play in this context.

*A representative of the United States of America* asked what concrete actions that the OSCE could undertake to help overcome the water governance challenges identified throughout the session and what OSCE tools could be used in this regard?

In response to the question from Armenia, *Mr. Saatci* noted that the presented projects are at the feasibility stage and are subject to further assessments. He noted the potential reduction of the river water flow was based on an assumption and shared an example of successful cooperation on similar projects in the Tigris river basin. He underlined the importance of strengthening trust between the riparian countries in transboundary river basins and reconfirmed that the feasibility study results would be shared with Armenia once the study is concluded.

In response to the question from the U.S., *Ms. Akhmouch* provided an example of the OECD's approaches to trigger action on the soft law OECD produces. Her suggestions included raising awareness of the cost of inaction with national and regional stakeholders, bringing stakeholders together to discuss concrete actions and enacting policy dialogue, identification of problematic issues for triggering action and the use of peer-to-peer dialogue.

*Mr. Cozzone* supported *Ms. Akhmouch's* statement and mentioned that usually countries try to identify the gains and benefits of transboundary co-operation when implementing strategies or conventions.

*The representative of Armenia* indicated his country's strong will for dialogue on the issues raised and provided some comparative indications on the dam projects in the river basin.

*The representative of Turkey* noted the Working Group established under the 1927 Agreement as an example of good practice and an appropriate venue for discussing the issues raised at expert level.

*The representative of Armenia* confirmed that the Working Group is a venue for addressing more technical issues.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Water crises are often governance crises and could be addressed through water governance which aims at delivering services, solving key water challenges, and assigning responsibility and accountability for results and performance;
- Water resources management and governance is inherently concerned with water security;
- The Sustainable Development Goals and the Integrated Water Management Goals are perceived differently by developing and developed countries; if developing nations still aim at reducing the poverty level, ensuring access to clean water, establishment of sustainable irrigation/ drainage systems as well as water supply and sanitation, the developed nations look into flood control, navigation, multipurpose storage, eco-restoration and biodiversity, as well as establishing hazard risk reduction plans;
- One of the challenges in the field of water management is that the goals of the various actors acting in the field (diplomats, engineers and ministries) do not always converge;
- The water sector is a fragmented sector that is sensitive to multilevel governance; in this respect, when aiming at identifying viable solutions for tackling the water management related challenges, overarching principles should be sought for rather than a one-size-fits-all response;
- Transboundary water co-operation generates more benefits than usually perceived, including social and environmental benefits, regional economic cooperation benefits as well as peace and security; the last two categories are a consequence of enhanced trust built among the parties;
- Assessing the benefits of water management can contribute to facilitating dialogue, launching cooperation process, consolidating existing cooperation through negotiations, supporting realization of advanced cooperation initiatives, such as joint projects;

- Regional development projects should be implemented taking into account the specificities and the relative strengths of each particular region.

*Session II Water governance at national level – best practices and new approaches in the OSCE region*

**Moderator:** Ambassador Andreas Papadakis, Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE

**Rapporteur:** Mr. Uros Milanovic, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

**Speakers:**

- Mr. Berdi Berdiyev, Head of the Department of Coordination of the Ecological Programmes, Ministry of Nature Protection, Turkmenistan
- Mr. Rob Uijterlinde, Dutch Association of Regional Water Authorities, The Netherlands
- Ms. Tatsiana Minzhurava, Chief Expert, Ministry of Natural Resources, Belarus

*Ambassador Andreas Papadakis* opened the session by introducing the focus of the session and the speakers.

*Mr. Berdi Berdiyev* noted that this year there was a significant emphasis on climate change and rational use of water resources within the international community, recalling the forthcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris and several high-profile global and regional water events. He referred to the previous discussions in the First and the Second Preparatory Meetings of the EEF, stressing the importance of the topic of water governance and highlighting close inter-linkages between climate change and water governance.

Mr. Berdiyev underlined the vulnerability of Central Asia to climate change and its impacts on water supply and food security in the countries of the region. The increasing water consumption in the region in the context of its growing population is expected to put more and more pressure on the rivers' water flow. Water is becoming one of the key defining factors for the region's development and environment. Mr. Berdiyev noted that regional consensus is the only acceptable platform for effective interaction between states in the Central Asia region. He indicated that Turkmenistan supports a rules-based approach to water and energy issues with due consideration of the interests of all the countries in Central Asia and involvement of international organizations. He referred to Turkmenistan's current chairmanship in the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development for Central Asia (ICSD) and its forthcoming chairmanship in the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) as of 2016. Mr. Berdiyev went on to outline Turkmenistan's initiative on establishment of a new political and diplomatic form of multilateral communications, such as water diplomacy that would enable a consistent dialogue aimed at covering all issues related to generation and restoration of water sources and their sound and efficient use and drafting of the United Nations water document. He also referred to another initiative by Turkmenistan regarding the creation of a regional centre on climate change related technologies in Central Asia, with a role in addressing water issues in the region. In conclusion, Mr. Berdiyev

stressed the priority of water governance issues in Central Asia in the context of co-operation with international organizations.

*Mr. Rob Uijterlinde* spoke about monitoring and assessment as drivers for improved water governance. Mr. Uijterlinde identified two (Principle 5 – water-related data and information and Principle 12 – regular monitoring and evaluation of water governance) of the OECD Water Governance Principles as most relevant in the context of monitoring and assessment. He gave a short overview of water governance in the Netherlands and detailed two types of assessments undertaken in the country: self-assessments by bench-marking and an external assessment by OECD in 2014. Mr. Uijterlinde went on to identify several recommendations arising from these assessments that can be useful in the OSCE context. Monitoring and assessment should be used as a tool for improvement, rather than judgement or shaming. It is important to focus on transparency and accountability in water governance, addressing the three layers of water governance: content, institutions and, importantly, relations. It is essential that transboundary water policies involve local and regional authorities. Finally, it is important to involve stakeholders at the earliest stage possible in monitoring and assessment.

*Ms. Tatsiana Minzhurava*, noted the relevance of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum in the context of global trends, including the critical importance of water resources. She presented the experience of the Republic of Belarus in the field of water governance with a focus on financing aspects. She underlined that the Republic of Belarus had introduced a basin approach for water management, including the establishment of basin councils and development of river basin management plans. Ms. Minzhurava outlined a number of states programmes and strategic documents designed to ensure sustainable and secure water resources. She noted that the bulk of water-related activities in these programmes are funded from the state and local budgets. At the same time, international financial institutions together with technical assistance projects also have a role to play in this context. As one of the examples she cited the development of a strategy for climate change adaptation in the Neman river basin with the support of the UNECE. In conclusion, she elaborated on the role of tax recovery and other taxation mechanisms in effectively governing water resources. The floor was then opened for discussion.

A representative of UNISDR asked whether the OECD assessment of the Netherlands included an opportunity to exchange with other countries and if these countries were supported to undertake similar assessments.

A representative of Spain inquired about the correlation between water governance related laws in the Netherlands and the EU.

In response to the question from UNISDR, Mr. Uijterlinde stated that it was the OECD assessment of the adaptability of the Netherlands' water governance system at the request of the Netherlands. The experience from other international basins was considered as a reference for this assessment.

In this regard, a representative of the OECD noted that the OECD Secretariat also involved three policy-makers from both OECD and non-OECD countries in the assessment of the water governance in the Netherlands.

In response to the question of Spain, Mr. Uijterlinde said that laws in the field of water governance are mainly shaped by relevant ministries, and that there is a joint reporting system regarding the compliance of these laws with the EU legislation.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Water diplomacy could enable a consistent dialogue aimed at covering issues related to generation and restoration of water resources and their sound and efficient use
- It is important to focus on transparency and accountability in water governance, addressing the three layers: content, institutions and relations.
- Monitoring and assessment could be used as an effective driver for improved water governance

*Session III Water governance and co-operation at transboundary level: lessons learnt for water diplomacy*

**Moderator:** Mr. Jan Dusik, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe

**Rapporteur:** Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- Ms. Marina Seliverstova, Head of the Federal Agency of Water Resources, Russian Federation
- Mr. Oliver Magnin, Water Policy Advisor, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation
- Mr. Sulton Rakhimzoda, First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan
- Mr. Benedikt Mandl, Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR Secretariat
- Mr. Ramiro Martínez, General Coordinator, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), Spain

*Mr. Jan Dusik, ENVSEC Chair, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe, introduced the session by referring to the linkages between the use of natural resources, including water, climate change, sustainable development and stability. He outlined the role of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) in the context of addressing water challenges in the OSCE region. Mr. Dusik noted that water could be a potential source of conflict as well as the unifying force and an opportunity for co-operation given the vital role of water for life, health, the environment, economic welfare and political and cultural linkages. He stressed that good governance of natural resources and the environment can contribute to peace-building by promoting confidence, co-operation and by triggering economic development and generating employment and sustainable livelihoods. While ecosystems recognize no political boundaries, environmental co-operation and diplomacy is an important tool for enhancing stability and promoting peace, he concluded.*

*Mrs. Marina Seliverstova, Head of the Federal Agency of Water Resources, Russian Federation, presented perspectives on water diplomacy as a tool for conflict prevention and trust building. Ms. Seliverstova noted a critical role that water resources have to play in the context of the growing water crisis and climate change. Water resources increasingly define economic sustainability, social and demographic development as well as help ensure global, regional and national security. She identified uneven spatial distribution of water resources as one of the major reasons for possible inter-state conflicts and underlined the need for coordinated collective action to address this challenge. She noted that the system of international organizations active in the field of water governance provides a viable mechanism for addressing the threats and challenges related to water and underlined that the OSCE as the largest regional security organization with a comprehensive approach to security provides a significant platform in this context. The UNECE Water Convention has a key role to play in the framework of international water law, as it provides for transboundary water co-operation and prevents potential conflicts.*

Ms. Seliverstova went on to draw attention to the phenomenon of hydroegoism at intra- and inter-state levels, proposing the development of an ethical code within the framework of international water law in order to prevent the use of water resources as an instrument of geopolitical pressure. In conclusion, she noted the need for expanding and intensifying co-operation between riparian states and water dialogue based on (1) further development of international water co-operation, its legal and institutional frameworks; (2) broadening of the geographic scope and the number of parties of the international water law; (3) exchange of knowledge and information, innovation and technology; (4) management of transboundary water resources at basin level; (5) water co-operation at basin level between states in the water-scarce regions; (6) rational use of water resources as a basis for national economic development plans of the riparian states; (7) integration of the norms of international water law and respective best practices into national legislation.

*Mr. Oliver Magnin, Water Policy Advisor, Swiss Agency for Development*, presented lessons learnt from the Innovative Technologies for Monitoring, Modeling and Managing Water (iMoMo) pilot project in the Chu-Talas river basins in Central Asia. He underlined the importance of sufficient and reliable data and information in the context of building confidence between transboundary water management organizations. Mr. Magnin noted that the transboundary co-operation in the Chu-Talas basins is a unique example in Central Asia and provides a fertile context for piloting innovative solutions proposed by the project. He went on to list the achievements of the project, including regular data exchanges between water producers and users at national and transboundary level, fully digitalized management and exchange of the run-off data for the Chu river, a web-based mapping tool for information sharing, automatically generated hydrologic bulletin for the Chu river and, importantly, the willingness of water users and managers at all levels to work with this system. The project's lessons learn include the use of a demand-driven approach, voluntary upload and sharing of data, early demonstration of the technology and the system to get the buy-in from all the beneficiaries. He also underlined the access to reliable and accurate data as key to negotiations related to governing transboundary water resources and, indirectly, as a driver for co-operation and development. In conclusion, he outlined a number of recommendations including the consolidation of projects results and their replication in other transboundary river basins in the OSCE area.

*Mr. Sulton Rakhimzoda, Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan*, spoke on the sustainable management of water resources with a focus on information systems and data exchange in Central Asia. Mr. Rakhimzoda noted the growing role of information systems, effective exchange of information and data quality in the context of the new challenges posed by climate change. He noted the need for appropriate legal frameworks at inter-state level to regulate the exchange of information and data and to define relevant modalities. Central Asian states have an agreement to exchange hydrometeorologic data, and the development of an agreement on data exchange in the Aral Sea basin is still ongoing. He underlined the importance of the rights of the parties and economic mechanisms for data exchange, including the operation and maintenance of information systems and databases. In his view, the regional information system for the Aral Sea basin should be built upon the viable information systems of national-level water management organizations, as well as basin-level systems. In conclusions, he provided an update on the water sector reform in Tajikistan and the role of information systems at national and basin levels in this regard. The design and interface of such systems should be consistent with those of similar systems in the other countries of the Aral Sea basin.

*Mr. Benedikt Mandl, Technical Expert – Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR Permanent Secretariat*, presented the experience of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) with a focus on public participation. He noted that ICPDR through its role in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Floods Directive in the basin has the capacity to project requirements of EU environmental legislation, including in the areas relevant to public participation, across the Danube river basin shared by both EU and non-EU countries. Mr. Mandl outlined the four key avenues for public consultation and participation within the framework of the ICPDR including: (1) a wide spectrum of observers taking part in expert groups; (2) outreach, education and public information activities, mainly steered by the Public Participation and Communication Expert Group of the ICPDR, including the Danube Watch Magazine and the Danube Day; (3) ad-hoc public consultations in the context of the development of river basin management plans and flood risk management plans and (4) intersectoral dialogue with a focus on the inland navigation, climate change adaptation, sustainable agriculture and sustainable development of hydropower. Mr. Mandl concluded with a number of suggestions. It is essential to engage all stakeholders in a given river basin involving upstream and downstream stakeholders. National stakeholders, in particular authorities, have a critical role to play. There is a need to utilize the existing relevant frameworks (e.g. UNECE, EU, Ramsar Convention, relevant bilateral agreements etc.). It is important to identify strong and engaged individuals in the riparian countries, e.g. civil society actors, and create on-going processes to cultivate this grassroots level.

*Mr. Ramiro Martinez, General Coordinator, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO)*, presented the experience of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations. He noted that MENBO had been present in a number of the major regional initiatives, including the preparation of the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean 2008 – 2010. Most recently, MENBO has acted as a technical secretariat for the development of the Water Strategy in the Western Mediterranean within the framework of the 5+5 Dialogue. The strategy comprises six fundamental pillars, including preservation of water quality and environment, prosperity and sustainable growth, global access to water, technological co-operation, capacity building as well as the peace and stability in the Western Mediterranean. Mr. Martinez emphasized the bottom-up approach accommodating inputs from all members as conducive to reaching consensus and unanimously adopting the strategy in March this year. The adoption of the strategy is a tangible step towards improving water governance in the Mediterranean region. A joint action plan for the strategy is currently under development. In conclusion, Mr. Matinez underlined the need for working towards achieving more ambitious targets for international co-operation, even in the less favorable circumstances, as well as the need for means to support such co-operative processes.

The floor was opened for discussion.

*A representative of Ukraine* stated that her country had entered into transboundary agreements on transboundary waters with seven neighboring countries and summarized the priority goals of such agreements. She noted that transboundary water co-operation is one of the top priorities for Ukraine.

*A representative of Lithuania* stressed the importance of collaborative and sustainable rules-based solutions in the context of appropriate frameworks for water co-operation and the role of water diplomacy as an important tool for such co-operation. She underlined that transboundary water co-operation should be based on international agreements related to the

use, management and protection of water resources, and include effective implementation of transboundary environmental impact assessments, in particular with regard to large-scale energy and infrastructure projects. She referred to the co-operation between Lithuania and Belarus in the Neman river basin, expressing a hope for the conclusion of a bilateral river basin agreement at the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention in Budapest in November this year.

*A representative of the Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE* inquired about the applicability of global-scale and regional-scale approaches in the case of water diplomacy. He also posed a question regarding the ways to demonstrate parties are working towards a common goal. He asked about how an organization in one of the ICPDR countries could approach ICPDR for help. He also inquired regarding further examples of technological co-operation within the framework of the 5+5 Dialogue in the Mediterranean.

*A representative of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina* stated the relevance of the network of the Aarhus Centers in South-Eastern Europe in the context of water co-operation and governance, including at transboundary level. She referred to a regional meeting of Aarhus Centers in Tirana earlier this year to address transboundary water co-operation and the role of Aarhus Centers as well as the involvement of Aarhus Centers during ICPDR consultations on the river basin management plan.

In commenting on the questions, *Mr. Martinez* noted the need for both global-level and regional approaches in addressing water governance challenges. He underlined that in the case of the Western Mediterranean, one of the key aspects is a regional dimension requiring the involvement of as many countries as possible in this region.

In response to the questions, *Mrs. Seliverstova* stated that normative and implementation issues should go in parallel. Any norm of international water law should be operationalized and acquire its value within the framework of a bilateral agreement related to a specific transboundary water body. It is a reiterative and continuing process which, inter alia, requires an analysis of existing best practices and lessons learnt. She stressed the added value of an OSCE platform for learning about best practices and applying them in other regions.

In response, *Mr. Magnin* referred to a multilevel approach combining global and local dimensions. He noted that his country is striving to work on political level but also fill this dialogue related to water governance with concrete examples and substance. Starting at bilateral level can be advisable in those cases when starting a regional dialogue immediately is not possible.

*Mr. Rakhimzoda* referred to 2013 the International Year of Water Co-operation and the contribution of the Dushanbe conference dedicated to water co-operation in the context of governing transboundary waters. He also underlined the role of political will as a foundation for developing water diplomacy and effective governance of transboundary water resources.

In response, *Mr. Mandl* thanked for the support provided by the Aarhus Centers in the consultation on the river basin management plan for the Danube. He underlined the importance of regional water co-operation in the context of the OSCE region as it can more effectively take local conditions into account. As regards the interaction of individual organizations with ICPDR, in the event this organization operates in one country alone, it

should approach an ICPDR contact point in this country. If it operates in more than one country, it is also possible to liaise with ICPDR directly.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Good governance of natural resources, including water, and the environment can contribute to peace-building by promoting confidence, co-operation and by triggering economic development and generating employment and sustainable livelihoods.
- The OSCE as the largest regional security organization with a comprehensive approach to security provides a significant platform for addressing water governance challenges.
- An ethical code could be developed within the framework of international water law in order to prevent the use of water resources as an instrument of geopolitical pressure.
- The availability of sufficient and reliable data and information has a key role to play in the context of building confidence between transboundary water management organizations and governing water resources at transboundary level. It also contributes to promoting co-operation and development.
- The role of information systems and exchange of information related to water governance is increasing in the context of the new challenges posed by climate change, in particular in Central Asia. Exchange of such data and information should be backed by appropriate legal frameworks at inter-state level.
- It is essential to engage all stakeholders in a river basin involving both upstream and downstream stakeholders and to recognize that national stakeholders, in particular authorities, have a critical role to play in governing water resources at transboundary level.
- It is important to identify strong and engaged individuals in the riparian countries, e.g. civil society actors, and create on-going processes to cultivate this grassroots level for effective water governance and co-operation at transboundary level.
- Bottom-up approaches that accommodate inputs from all stakeholders are conducive to enabling agreement on strategic documents related to the governance of transboundary water resources.
- Working towards achieving ambitious targets for international co-operation, even in the less favorable circumstances, should be accompanied by the means to support such co-operative processes.

*Session IV Panel debate - Water governance and sustainable development*

**Moderator:** Ms Biljana Filipović, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

**Rapporteur:** Ms Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Jan Dusik**, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe
- **Mr. Andrei A. Begeneev**, Member of the Committee on Ecology and Nature, Majlis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- **Dr. Marian Patrick Neal**, SIWI, Manager UNESCO-Centre for Water Co-operation
- **Dr. Wilhelm Vogel**, Head of the Unit Surface Water, Austrian Environmental Agency

*Ms Filipović* welcomed the speakers and introduced the main topic of the discussion - inter-linkages between water and security in the context of development and the role of water governance for socio-economic development and environmental protection. The moderator underlined the importance of engagement of all stakeholders in the post-2015 Development Agenda discussions. She also highlighted that the Sustainable Development Goals, a new agreement on Climate Change as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are mutually reinforcing. Ms. Filipovic then gave the floor to the panelists.

*Mr. Jan Dusik* stressed the significance of water for sustainable development. He also emphasized the enabling role of water for strengthening the resilience of social, economic and environmental systems. The speaker then referred to the progress that has been achieved in implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), nevertheless, he noted, attained results are unsatisfactory, since the large number of people around the world still do not have the access to improved drinking water sources, and safety and reliability of water supplies has been often overlooked. The speaker underlined that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in contrary to MDGs, integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions, as was visible in the water goal as well. Mr. Dusik also referred to the upcoming 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its strong linkage with water and security and stressed the importance to address water issues and climate issues together. Mr. Dusik expressed the hope that the proposed SDG indicators will allow to assess the progress adequately. He also emphasized the importance of producing and sharing data for this purpose. The speaker stressed the importance of engagement of stakeholders at national level in the implementation of the SDGs. Actions carried out at national level must take into account specific priorities and interest of the people in the countries, nevertheless, these actions must be in cohesion with the global development agenda. In concluding, he stated that, since water and related eco-systems cross boundaries, also the actions to achieve the water goal require transboundary co-

operation and national measures that reflect the challenges and needs of neighbouring countries as well. .

*Mr. Andrei Begeneev* focused his statement on Kazakhstan’s efforts to address water governance issues in the framework of five national reforms that are underway. The State management program of water resources for the period of 2015- 2020 was adopted last year. The parliament of Kazakhstan is working on a new legal basis for water management and ratified numerous international environmental conventions, including the UN Convention on Transboundary Watercourses,. The speaker also mentioned about the legislation that is being currently developed on “green economy”. The new strategy of Kazakhstan for 2050 aims at building the economic system that enables “green” development and growth. Mr. Begeneev then spoke about the importance of hydro-technical structures in Kazakhstan and need to elaborate specific legislation and safe operation of hydro-technical structures in order to prevent disasters. Such legal framework would also allow creating the basis for transboundary co-operation between countries. Mr. Begeneev highlighted the prospects of basin corporations in Kazakhstan that can be created on the basis of the existing business entities operating in the basin. They can be granted the status of general water user. Such basin corporations later can be transformed into the cross-border corporations facilitating transboundary co-operation in the region. He also referred to the Kazakh proposal at the High Level International Conference on the implementation of the International Decade for Action “Water for Life”, 2005-2015 in Dushanbe in June 2015 to establish a Central-Asian investment fund for water projects and a regional centre for water security . Mr. Begeneev emphasized the need of such an investment fund, which would facilitate development of partnerships in the sector. With the foreign assistance, the fund could obtain resources for the construction and repair of the hydraulic installations and cooperatively manage them. In concluding remarks, the speaker highlighted the need to create a Center of Water Security for prevention and liquidation of the emergency situations and natural disasters related to water. He also stressed that the joint management of water can lead to improved water security and environmental protection in the region.

*Dr. Marian Neal* focused her statement on two elements that are important for sustainable development and water co-operation – the scale and the time. She underlined the importance of multi-level approach for examining implementation of decisions and goals made at international and state level. The main challenge of this approach is to develop a better understanding of the issue of scale. Decisions made at international level that are considered to be best practices, might have negative results at sub-national and local level. She mentioned that the choice of analytical approaches, methodologies and measurements have direct impact on results that are reported. Ms. Neal stressed the importance of measuring and translating benefits of transboundary water management mechanisms (such as River Basin Organizations and international agreements) not only at regional, but also at local level and creating an enabling environment for distributing these benefits at the local level. Therefore, linking of track-1 and track-2 diplomacy is needed. For achieving the SDGs, Dr. Neal emphasized the importance of water diplomacy at multiple levels and at multiple scales. Water diplomacy needs to be multi-disciplinary that entails food, climate, energy, ecological diplomacy, underlined the speaker. She also drew attention to data and information that is needed for measuring the progress and for decision-making. Dr. Neal stressed the need of having a programme that is similar to the Local Agenda 21, that is actionable for realization of the SDGs. The Speaker also highlighted one of the main challenges of the SDGs – time. Water diplomacy takes time and we need to be patient. SDGs and their targets are designed around desired future state but Dr. Neal suggested having so called “moving targets” for

SDGs, which would take account of the constant changes that are happening. Another time-related factor to be considered is the cycles with different timeframes (for example short-term political election cycles, long-term landscape ecology cycles, immediate natural hazards, etc) that have impact on development.

*Mr. Wilhelm Vogel* spoke about Austria's experience in water governance. He highlighted the progress Austria has made since the 1960s, when water pollution was a major problem in lakes important for the tourism sector. After implementation of targeted measures Austria achieved high water quality in lakes. Similar measures were carried out for assessing and improving the ecological status of rivers. This process was rather costly due to the high costs of the waste water treatment plants and the measures introduced in the industrial sector. The positive results have been achieved thanks to a combination of legal and administrative measures, and clear communication and visualization of the improvements contributed to the acceptance of the costly measures by citizens and industry. Mr. Vogel stressed the importance of co-operation that has been established between national, bilateral and international bodies and committees covering national and transboundary river basins. The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), that introduced the general concept of the river basin management, strengthened the existing structures of co-operation in Austria by establishing a general obligation to ensure the mutual management of river basins in Europe. Mr. Vogel also spoke about other benefits of the WFD particularly underlining the sharing of benefits and the engagement of civil society in the basin management. Mr. Vogel then explained the institutional structure of water governance in Austria and distribution of responsibilities between the state institutions at national, provincial and local level, and highlighted mechanisms in conflict resolution between the water uses. One of them is the Environmental Impact Assessment that ensures that the balance between the economic gains and environmental goals is maintained.

The flood was open for discussion.

*A representative from Moldova* referred to the EU Association Agreement signed by Moldova and obligations undertaken by the country to achieve good water governance. The key aspect of water governance are effective legislation and institutional frameworks, underlined the speaker. In this regard, the major challenge is to reform the institutional capacity of Moldova in order to implement new legal frameworks. The representative highlighted the support of Switzerland and Austria provided for this purpose.

*A representative from Finland* underlined that reflections on water can be found in many SDGs beyond the water goal. Water diplomacy as multi-disciplinary approach reflects this cross-cutting role of water. He also referred to Goal 16 on peace as important for water governance. The speaker also stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement at the national level in the implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda, underlining the role of the OSCE in this regard.

*Mr. Jan Dusik* stressed the need to have sustainable development strategies that are adapted to local needs and to ensure the cross dimensionality of implemented measures. He also spoke about the indicators that are essential for measuring the progress. In his final remarks, Mr. Dusik highlighted the relevance of the OSCE's as a regional organization and its work for implementation of certain SDGs.

*Dr. Neal* reiterated the need to put together multi-disciplinary teams for water diplomacy to address all relevant questions.

*A representative from Azerbaijan* voiced the concern of Azerbaijan in regards to climate change impact on water resources and water availability on its territory. He also referred to the exposure of Azerbaijan to pollution through transboundary rivers and underlined the importance of water resources management and new infrastructure projects for responding to climate change challenges and the implementation of the SDGs.

*A representative from the USA* asked panellist how SDGs can be translated into actions that would bring benefits at local level and what the OSCE can do to further the implementation of SDGs.

*Dr. Neal* referred to the “Ecosystem Millennium Report” that applied multi-scale analysis by linking at results at local, regional and international levels. She also pointed out that the development of the actionable measures presents the real opportunity for scientists and policy makers to work together on methodologies that would link policy and practice. She underlined that often clear understanding of the processes at the level that is useful for the management and for decision-making is missing. *Dr. Neal* also stressed the importance of developing disaggregated data and conducting cascading analysis that would link the SDG indicators at different levels.

*A representative from Serbia* posed the question regarding the ENVSEC Initiative’s role in considering the OSCE commitments concerning the water governance and assist in implementing them.

*Mr. Jan Dusik*, mentioned that the ENVSEC Initiative has been very active in the water sector and is actively looking at the SDGs and trying to identify its role. The speaker then remarked, the inefficiency and lack of governance is one reason that sustainable development has not been achieved yet, which is contributing or triggering conflict situations. Although the link between the sustainable development and peace and security has not been translated into a stand-alone goal, it is a cross-cutting issue that needs to be further integrated into implementation of the SDGs.

*The representative of Austria* asked *Mr. Vogel* about the best practices in the management of the Danube River, and how transboundary problems have been mitigated and addressed.

*Mr. Vogel* underlined the importance of data and information sharing, as well as common methodologies and agreed definitions. The standards of water quality are outlined in the WFD, which allows countries of the basin to apply a standardized approach for generation of reliable and comparable data.

*A representative of Belarus* stressed that every country has the right to set up its infrastructure projects to achieve development, but also has to comply with international agreements and mechanisms for consultations with neighbouring countries. Belarus is party to the UNECE Water Convention and has a mechanism for consultation with the countries.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- The water governance issues are a key aspect of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in the dedicated goal 6 as well as a cross-cutting issue;

- SDGs must be translated into actions that are tailored to national needs, at the same time they require transboundary co-operation;
- Involvement of the population and sharing and communication of benefits can increase acceptance of necessary policies;
- Coordinated action is needed at various levels of governance to achieve SDG targets;
- SDGs must have actionable indicators to measure achievements at multiple levels: local, national and global and to monitor and evaluate the progressive realization of the SDGs;
- Water diplomacy has to operate at multiple levels and scales and must apply a multi-disciplinary approach (engaging diplomats, scientists, practitioners);
- Common approaches are needed for measuring SDG indicators in order to have comparable data for decision making;
- The OSCE should engage in implementation of SDGs directly and through its partnerships within the ENVSEC Initiative;

*Session V Facilitating effective water governance in the context of new environmental challenges*

**Moderator:** Ms Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

**Rapporteur:** Bernhard Romstorfer, Desk Officer, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE

**Speakers:**

- Mr. Benjamin Pohl, Senior Project Manager, Adelphi, Germany
- Mr. Yuriy Nabyvanets, Deputy Director on Science, Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute
- Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev, Executive Director, CAREC
- Mr. Paolo Angelini Head of Delegation to the Alpine Convention, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

*Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director of the Regional Environment Center for Central and Eastern Europe, referred to ongoing global policy processes such as the upcoming climate change negotiations in Paris, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda, and the Sendai, while many concrete action in addressing global environmental challenges are happening on the ground and the OSCE was tackling these issues in a proactive way.*

*Mr. Benjamin Pohl, Senior Project Manager at Adelphi, state that water is the medium through which climate change will be felt most. He referred to two reports published by Adelphi „A New Climate for Peace“ and „The Rise Of Hydro-Diplomacy“, which identified seven compound climate-related risks that might threaten the stability of states and societies, namely: 1) local resource competition; 2) livelihood insecurity; 3) extreme weather events and disasters; 4) volatile food prices and provision; 5) transboundary water management; 6) sea-level rise and coastal degradation; and 7) unintended effects of climate policies. Most of these risks are related to water. Climate change can also be a tool in the political discourse for some actors to challenge the economic, political and legal status quo in basins, thus destabilizing existing agreements. But it also entails opportunities as a shared threat can create a platform for co-operation and significant financial resources are earmarked for adaptation, which could improve resilience to conflicts. He stressed the need to think about and implement climate change adaption, disaster risk reduction, peace building and conflict prevention in an integrated way. He concluded with practical recommendations for OSCE support: : Strengthening water management institutions, strengthening transboundary co-operation mechanisms for data transparency and beyond, including through support of access of river basin organizations to Green Climate Fund developing joint and integrated vulnerability assessments, and support of networks of research co-operation*

*Mr. Yuriy Nabyvanets, Deputy Director of Science of the Ukrainian Hydrometerological Institute, gave his presentation on adaption to climate change in the transboundary Dniester River Basin. He stated that basin-wide co-operation helps to prevent negative impacts of unilateral implementation and reduces uncertainty and costs. He gave an overview of the significant role of the Dniester River which is a key source for drinking water in this area.*

Baseline studies had been carried out which provide regional climate change models. With these models trends can be set out regarding climate change. Furthermore, there are vulnerability assessments and a joint adaptation strategy has been created which functions as a framework for co-operation. And finally a Strategic Framework Implementation Plan was developed as well. Mr. Nabyvanets also pointed out the lessons learnt: consultation processes with stakeholders are complex and time consuming; co-operation with stakeholders needs to be improved; climate change adaptation is not yet a priority for many agencies. He emphasized how much the Dniester River project promoted the transboundary co-operation between Moldova and Ukraine. He recommended the OSCE for this project to strengthen the co-operation between stakeholders, to facilitate the implementation of the Dniester Treaty and to support improved Dniester reservoirs management.

*The moderator Ms. Bonifert* emphasized that this project is a very good example for extended co-operation and she is very proud of the implementation of this project, which is supported by the European Commission, Finland and Austria.

*A delegate from Ukraine* stated that the transboundary Project at the Dniester river is very important and highlighted the co-operation with Moldova and UNECE and OSCE; it could be an example for co-operation between Ukraine and Moldova on various projects. She also mentioned a monitoring programme for the river, which takes climate change into account.

*A delegate from Moldova* added that this project is also very important to Moldova and one of the most successful projects. She expressed her hope that international organizations will further support the agreement as there is political will on both sides to take it forward.

*A delegate from the Czech Republic* asked about the length of a period for floods forecasts.

*Mr. Nabyvanets* replied that models are being developed at the moment; while there is demand for long prediction (1 month), the current focus is on 7-day forecasts.

*Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev, Executive Director of the Central Asian Regional Environmental Centre (CAREC)*, gave a presentation on how to strengthen local level institutions. He started by stating that there is a growing number of water related challenges such as droughts, floods or water shortage. Also, there is a growing pressure of new environmental challenges as the reduction of productivity of agriculture increases the potential of conflicts – not only between countries but also on local level. He pointed out that strong institutional arrangements at the local level are absent and local knowledge was dislinked from national processes. He emphasized the importance for national institutions of finding effective instruments to implement national plans and programs at a local level. He explained that the answer must be local level governance: the set-up of strong, inclusive governance systems at the local (community) level. While structures are de jure decentralized, de facto local governance is decapitalized in financial, technical and institutional respect. Mr. Abdullaev highlighted that financing is the key as funding mechanisms of governance structures at local level is a key to mobilization of stakeholders to act together. Private investments could also be increased and attracted. He pointed out that there are existing „best practices“ such as Basin Councils which are platforms for co-operation. Long-term basin planning is not only a tool to create a joint vision, but also to integrate stakeholders, mobilize resources, and share responsibilities.

*Mr. Paolo Angelini, Head of Delegation to the Alpine Convention, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy*, contributed with a presentation on the environmental

challenges that water governance is facing with a focus on the Alpine Convention area. He declared that the 1991 Alpine Convention (8 countries participate as well as the EU) is a key example for an integrated approach including the different economic sectors linked with water. Also, a multi-level governance approach is needed so to enhance the preparedness and capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change at various levels. Important is to reduce vulnerability and to increase resilience and cost-effective measures. The Alpine Convention is a good example for this. He noted that there is close co-operation between the UNECE Water Convention and the Alpine Convention and that there is an on-going case study of the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus assessment on an Alpine transboundary basin: the Soca/Isonzo. He explained that the adaptation to climate change in water-related sectors requires public awareness and the participation of civil society and local stakeholders.

The floor was opened for discussion.

*A representative from Uzbekistan* asked Mr. Abdullaev about rehabilitation of irrigation systems and development of information systems.

*Mr. Abdullaev* replied that there are examples in all countries, e.g. in Uzbekistan where local users repaired the irrigation systems. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have good experience in water monitoring in transboundary basins, which helped to solve problems at local levels and shows that it makes sense to involve local stakeholders.

*Mr. Nabyvanets* stated that the Dnieper river project is a joint project between Russia, Belarus and Ukraine and mentioned that problems occur when there is no international funding anymore and necessary maintenance stalls. He suggested not to always ask only international donors but also to include investors from the local level.

*A representative of the United States of America* agreed with the suggestion of more private sector involvement. He referred to the severe droughts experienced in California, one of the largest economies in the world, where great potential for private investors lies. He also inquired in how far the OSCE could help in developing legal frameworks for financing.

*A civil society representative from Kazakhstan* explained about vulnerability assessments in Kazakhstan and suggested that policy measures to integrate findings into climate change adaptation policies was an area for co-operation with OSCE

*Mr. Pohl* stated regarding financing that the problem is less the shortage of it but rather its discontinuity, e.g. when donors change their priorities to other sectors.

*Mr. Abdullaev* replied that financing that creates ownership is needed, i.e. national governmental or private money. There are good examples of involvement of the business community, but the right frameworks are needed.

*Mr. Angelini* added that investors need the support of local governments, and that the involvement of the business community together with local government worked in South-Tyrol.

*The moderator Ms. Bonifert* pointed out that the Alpine Convention is a good example for regional co-operation.

*The Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Dr. Yurdakul Yigitgüden,* highlighted that the Forum cycle is the most important instrument for dialogue and co-operation which is supported by many projects. He concluded by stating his hope for a Ministerial Council Decision this year in Belgrade on these issues.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- Identifying the best solutions that could be implemented and ensuring the policy coherence of the measures requires both coordination among different levels of government and exchange of experiences and best practices among different networks of co-operation;
- Water management in an integrated approach is a central priority to tackle climate change impacts;
- Water management institutions need to be strengthened as well as transboundary co-operation mechanisms;
- Integrated vulnerability assessments have to be developed and promoted;
- National institutions need to find effective instruments to implement national plans and programs at a local level.

*Session VI Governing waters for effective disaster risk reduction*

**Moderator:** Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

**Rapporteur:** Mr. Darren Perdue, Political Officer, United States Mission to the OSCE

**Speakers:**

- Mr. Pavel Puncochar, Director General, Water Section Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic
- Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, Chair Global Water Partnership
- Mr. Jan Lueneburg, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia
- Ms. Paola Albrito, Head of the Regional Office for Europe, UNISDR
- Mr. Jože Papež, Head of Development and Projects Department, Hidrotehnik, Slovenia

*Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship*, introduced the session and referred to the focus on three specific topics: (1) Cooperative water governance as a catalyst for preventive action; (2) Water and security in the context of the follow-up to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015-2030; and (3) Water-related DRR as a tool for trust-building at all levels, including with its gender aspects. The Ambassador discussed the decision last year in Basel to focus the Economic and Environmental Forum on DRR, and also referred to the severe floods experienced in 2014 in South- Europe. As a result, a Ministerial Council Decision on DRR was reached in Basel. Following the 2014 Ministerial, the Serbian Chairmanship proceeded to link last year’s work on DRR with Governance and Water Security, particularly within the Sendai Framework for DRR – part of the post 2015 development agenda.

*Mr. Pavel Puncochar, Director General, Water Section Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic*, focused his presentation on the Czech Republic’s experience with governance on flood protection in transboundary basins. With three international river basins that all flow to neighbouring countries – the Elbe, Oder, and Danube – the Czech Republic’s position as the “Roof of Europe” means that decisions on water management directly affect other countries. For all three rivers, international commissions have been established in the 1990s. Neighbouring countries, which must absorb the results of decisions made by the Czech Republic, always need to know what to expect – making effective communication vital. Thus, the Czech Republic has established a communication strategy to notify neighbouring countries of its national water plan, flood preparation, and implementation. This became acutely important during the catastrophic floods of 1997, the worst floods in one-hundred years. In addition, Mr. Puncochar highlighted main flood protection measures and lessons learned from nine severe floods that have occurred since 1997. First, it is essential to pass DRR legislation that specifies responsibilities. The Czech Republic did so in 2000 and 2001, including Acts on fire rescue brigades, an integrated rescue system, crisis management, water management, a Decree of flood areas, and creation of the Central Flood Commission. This

new legislation is generally recognized as among the best DRR laws in Central Europe. Second, developing an information system to quickly disseminate information to the general public is crucial. Data must be provided in a user-friendly format that the general public in the country and across the borders can understand. The Czech Republic devised a system backed with comprehensive data that indicates the severity of risk for any given area, and made the information available on both the internet and via mobile phones in six languages. The information system provides an easily understood flood preparation using green, yellow, or red indicators for different stages of emergency for each watershed. Additional data is available, including the flow rate, filling of reservoirs, and fluctuation of water volume in each reservoir, and is updated every ten minutes. Finally, continuous upgrades are made to improve the communication links between responsible authorities and provide additional relevant data. By doing so, individuals can access all of the information available, easily understand it, and make preparations and decisions about flood risk. On transboundary level, common bodies and joint strategies for flood protection are necessary.

*Dr. Usrula Schaefer-Preuss, Chair, Global Water Partnership, Germany*, stressed that water-related disasters are the most numerous disasters worldwide with the biggest economic losses. The World Economic Forum's 2015 Risks Report ranked water as the global risk with the greatest potential impact on economies and societies over the next ten years. Water insecurity costs are estimated at US\$ 500 billion annually. With the resulting environmental impacts, this could create a negative drag on global GDP of at least one percentage point. Flood damage from urban property damage alone is estimated at US\$ 120 billion. Conversely, the impacts of major droughts are estimated to reduce per capita GDP growth by one half of a percentage point. Investing in water security would mitigate many of these losses and promote long-term sustainable growth. For example, in particularly vulnerable economies, a 50 percent reduction in drought effects could increase per capita GDP by 20 percent over a thirty-year period. Dr. Schaefer-Preuss shared that the Global Water Partnership has contributed to the elevation of water as a global concern. She commended the OSCE's work with participating States to support co-operation and more effectively manage water resources. Effective water governance needs partnerships of all stakeholders. Dr. Schaefer-Preuss reminded participants of the main messages from the OSCE Forum in Belgrade in May, including the OSCE's important role in transboundary co-operation, improving existing international mechanisms for DRR co-operation, and a stronger focus on disaster prevention and preparedness. The main elements of the Sendai Framework were also reviewed, including its strong emphasis on disaster risk management, as opposed to mere disaster management, and on national and local ownership. However, a strong focus on water was missing; therefore the inclusion of a dedicated water goal in the Post-2015 Development Agenda to be adopted at next week's UN Summit was even more important. Unfortunately, DRR aspects were not focused under the water goal, but are spread among the targets. She also reminded that DRR must be based on an inclusive, participatory approach that engages women, children, and the poor as crucial stakeholders and provided concrete examples of the benefits. She pleaded to continue strengthening water governance as part of active disaster risk reduction.

*Mr. Jan Lueneburg, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia*, provided a snapshot of how the OSCE Mission to Serbia (OMIS) has used water governance and water-related DRR as a means to build trust at all levels. He gave an overview on various activities, for example the Timok River Flood Risk Action Alliance, which requires working in the flood prone region between Serbia and Romania. The Alliance brought together state institutions, local governments, the private sector, media, community organizations, and OSCE-supported Aarhus Centers. The various groups established common goals, formalized

their partnership, mapped vulnerable communities, developed an action plan, and conducted outreach. Through this, trust was built among actors which otherwise might not have come together. Now there are plans to duplicate this approach in two other flood-prone areas. OMIS has also worked to build the capacity of municipal authorities, Aarhus Centres and civil society to improve flood prevention practices in high-risk areas across Serbia. In doing so, part of its focus has been on understanding and addressing the gender impacts of water disasters. With a Gender Analysis of the impact of the 2014 floods, OMIS was able to demonstrate that women were disproportionately affected and developed specific recommendations to mainstream gender issues into DRR planning, including gender-based media reporting during emergencies, stronger co-operation with communities to identify vulnerable groups, and strengthened participation of women in DRR planning. In closing, Mr. Lueneburg stressed that all this was achieved with very modest budget allocations for environmental affairs, which are a good investment.

*Ms. Paola Albrito, Head of the Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), detailed the enormous economic costs of water-related disasters, citing specific examples in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia resulting from the 2014 flooding in the Balkans. According to Serbia's Ministry of Finance, only 2 percent of the damage and losses were covered by insurance and reinsurance; the remainder was absorbed by the private sector. Therefore also the private sector is highly willing to engage in DRR and UNISDR initiated private-public partnerships. The inter-connection is clear between the extremely high economic losses from disasters, the immediate impact on sustainable development, and the long-term future loss of development. UNISDR's efforts to include DRR as a priority on the international agenda were discussed, including making it an integral part of sustainable development. In this respect, partnerships are essential, and the work and debates of the OSCE contribute to this. Ms. Albrito explained the Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030) and its linkages with the SDGs and the climate negotiations. She mentioned two ongoing areas of work where OSCE can contribute: (1) the creation of a technical experts working group to develop indicators and terminology, also in linkage with SDGs indicators; (2) development of guidelines for implementation. Here, an OSCE contribution in particular on water would be welcome. The Sendai Framework recognizes water as an essential element of national and regional sustainability, natural hazards may become disasters due to societal vulnerability and the mismanagement of ecosystems and natural resources, and that climate change may have an exacerbating effect on the frequency and magnitude of disasters, thus increasing the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation to reduce disaster risk. Ms. Albrito reminded that the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 6/14 (a) encourages OSCE participating States to coordinate and implement DRR measures with adaptation and mitigation plans, and (b) tasks OSCE executive structures, particularly the OCEEA, to strengthen the exchange of knowledge and experience, build upon the OSCE's good practices in DRR, particularly in the fields of water management, flood risk management, and fire management. Finally, the importance of promoting investments in DRR was discussed. Including DRR measures in urban and industrial planning is important, as is adopting appropriate building codes and purchasing insurance and reinsurance to protect investments. Public and private partnerships are an essential part of this, and contribute to economic, social, health, and cultural resilience. Sustainable development cannot be achieved unless disaster risk is reduced and life conditions, security, and financial and economic capacity are ensured for all. As a political and policy entity, the OSCE can play an important part in sharing concepts and practices, and ensuring that this remains part of the international agenda.*

*Mr. Jože Papež, Head of Development and Projects Department, Hidrotehnik, Slovenia,* emphasized the importance of integrated flood risk management, pointing to Slovenia's experience with large floods during the last 25 years, increasing in relation with climate change, which led to enormous damages. He commended the EU Flood Directive that obliged member states to implement integrated flood risk management. These issues were also addressed on transboundary level in the framework of the Natural Hazards Platform of the Alpine Convention (PLANALP), which prepared a strategy for climate change adaptation in the field of natural hazards. With regard to infrastructure for flood protection, he stressed the importance of (often cost-intensive) maintenance. In this respect, communication and transparency is important for understanding of measures by local actors. Through its eWater Portal, Slovenia has made all of its data on hazard risks available online to the general public and to all concerned institutions. The portal is free of charge, is publicly available, and provides a critical communication platform to raise awareness of risks – an important non-structural preventive measure. Importantly, the portal also provides links to data provided by the governments of neighbouring countries, with which Slovenia shares water resources. Communication about disaster risks and increasing understanding among all authorities is important. Looking forward, activities should be focused on further developing efficient national systems of protection against disasters, strengthening bilateral and regional co-operation, and implementation of the EU flood directive – all these activities need sufficient financial resources. Policymakers need to ensure that today's solutions to water challenges do not become the problem of future generations, according to Mr. Papež. Finally, he called attention to the challenge of public perception, noting that the general public often underestimates the probability of future floods.

The floor was opened for discussion.

*A representative of Uzbekistan* detailed his country's work to implement the Sendai Framework for DRR, including establishment of the legal base and inclusion of the private and non-governmental sectors. However, efforts of one state without co-operation of other states were not productive, in particular in relation with managing transboundary water resources. He pointed also to the serious risks of outburst floods from high mountain and glacier lakes, which presented a risk in particular for the Fergana valley, which is surrounded by 187 lakes at high altitude in the neighbouring states. The representative highlighted that mountain and glacier lakes need long-term monitoring systems, emergency assistance systems, scientific research and establishment of a database to deal with emergencies. International donors could assist in (1) joint comprehensive research on the glacier lakes, (2) joint mechanisms of the concerned countries for monitoring and emergency situations, (3) development of a unified risk assessment system, (4) inventory of geological objects and GIS data base.

*A representative of Azerbaijan* emphasized the importance of taking measures to deal with flash floods, noting that high volumes of water cannot be contained. He inquired about different aspects for developing solutions, like early warning, a second line of defense, and financial means.

*A representative of Spain* detailed the extreme climate conditions facing southern Europe. Managing water risks from climate change is becoming increasingly difficult, as Spain faces repeated periods of drought. Ensuring food security and the safety of populations from ongoing water shortages is crucial. Water must be managed in an integrated, sustainable way, as required in the EU Water Framework Directive with river basin management plans.

Resolving water management issues in a fair, equitable way that takes into account gender equality is also important, according to the representative.

*A representative of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina* informed about an OSCE project activity in the municipality of Maglay, which was affected by the 2014 floods, causing a damage of estimated 85 million Euros. Upon request of the municipality, the OSCE financed a case study identifying lessons learnt and weaknesses and proposing recommendations and actions.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- The work that the OSCE is undertaking with its participating States in supporting co-operation and helping them effectively manage water resources is important.
- The evidence is compelling that global and regional co-operation can help solve the many water challenges facing humanity.
- As detailed in the OSCE Forum in Belgrade in May:
  - The OSCE is well placed to increase trust by linking climate change and DRR. It plays a role in overcoming difficulties in regional and transboundary co-operation and increase of DRR.
  - There is a need to further improve existing mechanisms of international co-operation for disaster risk management.
  - Stronger focus on disaster prevention and preparedness is needed. The OSCE should continue supporting the participating States in developing legal frameworks for cross-border co-operation and providing a platform for experience sharing.
- DRR must be based on an inclusive, participatory approach that engages women, children, and the poor as crucial stakeholders.
- Water governance and DRR preparation can be used as a tool to build trust across borders and among different actors.
- OSCE field operations can play an important role in building the capacity of municipal authorities and civil society to upgrade flood prevention practices.
- The OSCE should explore opportunities to strengthen the role of Aarhus Centers in flood risk reduction.
- Data can provide critical insight into understanding the location of vulnerable residents.
- OSCE field operations can help provide gender-sensitive distribution of aid, financial assistance and donations, and assistance to recovery.
- The OSCE could potentially play an important role in implementing the Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030)

*Session VII Strengthening participation and awareness raising for effective water governance*

**Moderator:** Ms **Désirée Schweitzer**, Deputy Co-ordinator / Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Rapporteur:** Mr. **Zhaslan Nurtazin**, Associate Environmental Governance Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- Ms **Biljana Filipović**, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia
- Mr. **Aleksandar Perovic**, Manager, Aarhus Centre Niksic, Montenegro
- Mr. **Andreas Beckmann**, Managing Director of WWF, Danube – Carpathian Programme

*Ms Desiree Schweitzer* opened the session by recalling some of the major points of the discussions of the past two days. She stressed the need of raising awareness about the value of water and the need for economical use, in order to realize efficient water management, and underlined the need of participation of all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector to ensure an effective implementation of the principles of good water governance. The 59 OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres are offering an appropriate platform for dialogue among different stakeholders in relevant areas including disaster risk reduction, hazardous waste management and flood risk management.

*Ms Biljana Filipović* noted the important role of Aarhus Centers in Serbia in strengthening participation and awareness-raising about water related issues. She also mentioned that Aarhus Centers proved to be an important tool for addressing environment and security challenges. She commended the co-operation between the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection and the Aarhus Centers, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection with four Aarhus Centers in July 2013 and their involvement in the areas affected by the floods in May 2014. *Ms Filipović* outlined examples of the OSCE support in the promotion of the UNECE Protocol on Water and Health (PWH) on national and local level, including the involvement of the Aarhus Centers in the preparation and delivery of workshops on the Protocol. She shared the lessons learnt from the implementation of these workshops: the importance of involving the public in decision-making concerning water and health; access to information and public participation are essential for building public awareness of issues related to water and health; political will at the national and local level was stressed as crucial for success, furthermore, this process created a shared vision and mutual understanding between all stakeholders. Awareness raising campaigns organized in close partnership with the OSCE Mission in Serbia through Aarhus Centers helped to improve the knowledge of vulnerable groups about the future implementation of the Protocol. They need to be complemented by additional interventions over a longer period of time.

*Mr. Aleksandar Perovic* presented the role of Aarhus Centers in Montenegro in fostering participation and raising awareness for better water management. He stressed the importance of enabling all stakeholders to participate in decision making processes since what is decided now will not only affect the present but also future generations. Speaking of the potential of the Aarhus Centres network comprising 13 Aarhus Centers in the SEE region (*Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania*), he noted their capacity to enable timely dissemination of information, and raising participation as well as quality of public consultations and discussions. Mr. Perovic underlined that water management must be a top priority for all stakeholders and outlined activities for the Aarhus Center in Niksic that should be conducted in order to achieve positive results in water management, including the need to initiate public consultations on the state of water resources and plans for their valorisation, to conduct continuous monitoring (such as riverbed concessions, riverbeds channelling projects), to carry out surveys among citizens on the state of water resources and to conduct continuous monitoring on the transparency of the relevant institutions, cooperate with inspectors and inform the public about the outcomes. In conclusion, he suggested that Aarhus Centers can play a proactive role in improving inter-sectoral cooperation and trust between the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Environmental Agency and Municipalities by initiating and amending legislative plans and strategies and by encouraging the involvement of citizens and NGOs in this process.

*Mr. Andreas Beckmann* noted that the only way to meet the growing challenges connected to water is by working together – across countries and across sectors. Referring to the vital role of governments, public authorities and inter-governmental organizations in the context of ensuring sustainable river basin management, he welcomed OSCE’s engagement in the field of water governance. Mr. Beckmann noted that close involvement of civil society and the private sector is crucial in achieving substantial results in river basin management. According to the speaker, the private sector with its substantial water footprint is an important part of the solution to water challenges. Private companies should not only innovate and find solutions, but also make those solutions happen as they have the know-how, capacities, and resources needed to tackle water challenges. As a concrete example, *Mr. Beckmann* mentioned that Coca-Cola and some other private companies realize their increasing dependence on water, directly or indirectly, and recognize that to mitigate the risks from this dependence, they need to go beyond improving their own use of water, to address also the way that water is used in their supply chains, by their consumers and also in the broader river basins. In conclusion, *Mr. Beckmann* outlined specific recommendations for the OSCE and its participating States with regard to water governance. It is recommended to learn from best practices examples such as in the Danube Basin– the most international river basin embracing both EU and non-EU countries. In particular the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is a good practice example for international governance and management of river basins. The effectiveness of the ICPDR lies not only in the progressive EU Water Framework Directive, the implementation of which underlies much of ICPDR’s work, but also in the way that ICPDR engages and involves not only its member countries but also civil society and the private sector. He also noted the value of OSCE’s involvement in addressing environmental issues that have transboundary implications.

The floor was opened for discussion.

*The Moderator* posed some questions to each of the speakers. Mr. Petrovic was asked about the next steps and activities planned by the SEE Aarhus Centres’ network. Ms. Filipovic was

invited to comment, from a government perspective, about the added value of engaging Aarhus Centres and Mr. Beckmann was asked to elaborate on benefits he sees regarding cooperation between WWF and OSCE.

*A representative of the United States* drew attention to the severe draught in California, where a lot of innovative solutions are being applied and where the private sector is driving investments to tackle this issue, but mentioned that much more could be done. He inquired about the involvement of Aarhus Centers in bringing the private sector into the promotion workshops on the Protocol, and about ways to work closer with the business sector and what should be the focus in this regard.

In response, *Ms Filipovic* noted that Aarhus Centres are the appropriate places, where public consultations regarding environmental issues should take place. The benefit of Aarhus Centres: they can engage a large number of local communities, governmental officials, civil society and the private sector. She also underlined that a broad number of private companies, in particular in the waste water treatment sector participated in the public consultations in Serbia. As to future activities, she is expecting the support of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, especially in the process in setting targets related to water security.

*Mr. Perovic* responded by informing that they - within the regional network of Aarhus Centers - are currently working on a project proposal "Civil Society Facility for 2014-2015". He expressed the need for capacity building of the AC' network, as well as the need to develop a 5-year strategy and communication plan, and hoped for support from the Government of Montenegro, the OSCE, and other organizations, like WWF.

*Mr. Beckmann* referred to issues around transboundary protected areas in the Balkans. He noted the OSCE could provide support in helping address such issues of concerns in a transboundary context. He also underlined his organizations' help for private sector to realize the direct and indirect dependence on water resources in their business.

*A representative of Ukraine* referred to the establishment of basin councils in Ukraine. However, they have yet to begin to function effectively. In this regard, she inquired about possible best practices and positive experience in establishing basin councils in the Danube River Basin.

*A representative of an Aarhus Center in Bosnia-Herzegovina* informed about the activities of the Aarhus Centers in this country. Related to water issues, she noted several cases with mini-hydropower plants, where the public has yet to be sufficiently included in the decision making process. She also stated that all Aarhus Centers have a big potential which all stakeholders should use and she invited all donors to support their activities.

In response, *Mr. Beckmann* pointed to the positive example of the Danube Basin. One of the interesting parts of this experience is that in this basin there are EU and non-EU member states, including EU candidate countries, and very different economic and institutional conditions present for basin councils. He also mentioned that Ukraine had made a commitment to implement the provisions of the EU Water Framework Directive already before the signing of the EU Association Agreement with the EU in 2014. Both Ukrainian authorities and civil society play a very important role in providing good expert advice for the work of ICPDR.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Aarhus Centers have proved to be an important tool for addressing environment and security challenges and play an important role in strengthening public participation and awareness raising on water related issues;
- Aarhus Centers can play an active role in improving inter-sectoral cooperation and trust between governmental and nongovernmental bodies on water related issues;
- Surveys among citizens on the state of water resources need to be carried out;
- Involvement of civil society and the private sector is crucial in achieving substantial results in river basin management.

## Concluding Plenary Session – Follow-up to the 23<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

**Moderator:** **Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden**, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras**, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

### Speakers:

- **Ambassador Vuk Žugić**, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship
- **Ambassador Antje Leendertse**, Head of the Task Force for the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

*Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden*, provided an overview of the discussion during the Concluding Meeting on various aspects of water governance. He underlined that the Forum enabled a good exchange on linkages between water and security from various angles—from global processes related to climate change and sustainable development, to challenges associated with multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder co-ordination, as well as water related disasters and their implications for security. He emphasized that the Forum was a strong plea for an enhanced focus on water governance in the Second Dimension. Dr. Yigitgüden reminded participants that the keynote speeches by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia H.E Ivica Dacic and the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs H.E Didier Burkhalter, identified the urgency, relevance and appropriateness of the OSCE to step up its activities on water governance – at regional, national and local level. The Forum has also demonstrated the experience and expertise the OSCE has already acquired, in particular in its support to transboundary water co-operation. Dr. Yigitgüden noted that during the Forum, several concrete suggestions were made on how the OSCE's engagement in water governance should be further reinforced and also referred to the recommendations of the UNECE Review Report. Dr. Yigitgüden underlined the importance of partnerships in addressing environment and security challenges, including in the area of water and highlighted OSCE's longstanding partnership within the Environment and Security Initiative as well as the new partnerships such as within the OECD Water Governance Initiative. He pointed out to the 2015 global processes including the upcoming UN Summit on Sustainable Development and the COP21. Regarding the latter, he underlined the strong links between water governance and climate change. In concluding, he informed the participants on the upcoming Security Days Event on Climate Change which would be organized by the OSCE Secretary General on 28 October 2015 in Vienna.

*Ambassador Vuk Žugić* highlighted that the Forum proved its added value in developing relevant political recommendations and interests in the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE. Ambassador Žugić underlined that the Forum process had clearly demonstrated the linkages between water governance and security in the OSCE region. Referring to the devastating floods in the Western Balkans in 2014, he emphasized that the floods had demonstrated the transboundary impacts of natural disasters, importance of water

governance for security and stability, and the need for co-operation across national borders. Ambassador Žugić underlined that the Forum discussions enabled an exchange on numerous best practices of co-operation between the participating States in addressing water-related challenges. Ambassador Žugić shared his following observations from the discussion during the entire Forum process: *First*, Water is a scarce resource that is critical for the well-being of people, security of whole communities and regions and at the same time it has the potential to impact the stability of countries; *Second*, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches are essential for decision-making in the area of water governance. The OSCE should use its unique expertise to strengthen national processes for multi-stakeholder engagement; *Third*, political will is critical to successful water governance when dealing with issues of security and stability; *Fourth*, the Forum process demonstrated the strong interest of participating States in the area of water governance. Ambassador Žugić emphasized that as the OSCE was moving towards the Belgrade Ministerial Council Meeting in December, it would be crucial to catch the momentum and translate political will expressed during the Forum into a sound and well-focused document, reaffirming and underpinning the OSCE mandate in the area of water governance. He provided a number of suggestions on the elements to be contained in this document: promoting public participation and transparency in water governance, use of environmental co-operation as a tool for conflict prevention and confidence building, support for implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, promoting active engagement of youth, mainstreaming gender perspective to water governance and water diplomacy, co-ordination with other regional and international organizations, expanded role for the OSCE involvement in water diplomacy and in transboundary water co-operation. Ambassador Žugić stated that the Serbian Chairmanship would also advocate for a political declaration in the area of sustainable development at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade. He marked that the Forum's discussions repeatedly referred to the importance of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals and the role that water plays in achieving them and emphasized that the OSCE, as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter should also contribute to this global process.

*Ambassador Antje Leendertse*, representing the incoming 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship, noted importance and timeliness of discussing the “water governance” topic within the 2015 Forum process and referred to the importance given to the water issue in the sustainable development goals which would be adopted in September 2015. Referring to the role of good water governance in promoting cross-border co-operation, conflict prevention and confidence building, Ambassador Leendertse emphasized that it is a highly relevant policy area for the OSCE and for the common goals and commitments of the OSCE participating States. She pointed out to Germany's active engagement in water diplomacy and particularly referred to the “Berlin Process” through which a ministerial conference had been recently held in Berlin which brought together five Central Asian states on water issues. Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities had also participated as a speaker in this event. Ambassador Leendertse encouraged the OSCE executive structures and the field operations to continue their work on water governance issues and encouraged participating States to strengthen co-operation in this field. Furthermore, Ambassador Leendertse presented 2016 Chairmanship priorities in the second dimension. She indicated that Germany would like to strengthen the second dimension in general and economic aspects in particular. Ambassador Leendertse informed the delegates on the topic for the EEF cycle 2016: “Strengthening stability and security through co-operation on good governance” which would address good economic governance, migration and good environmental governance with the primary focus being on economic

aspects of these issues. She also informed participants that the incoming Chairmanship was planning to organize an event that would involve the business community and should address the issues of ‘connectivity’, in particular issues of transport infrastructure, issues in border and customs administration and other practical issues of good governance in the OSCE space. Ambassador Leendertse concluded underlining that OSCE should be used as a forum for exchange of experiences with a broad membership and should advance the dialogue on how economic governance could be improved.

The floor was opened for discussion.

The *representative from the European Union* referred to the importance of promoting collaborative and sustainable management arrangements of freshwater resources for preventing political tensions, instability or even conflicts related to the use and management of shared water resources. He also underlined the role of water issues as a catalyst for closer regional co-operation and integration which is especially relevant in the definition and implementation of key policies, agriculture and food security, energy and sustainable use of water resources. The representative reemphasized that there are clear security impacts associated with water governance and in this respect expressed their support to the Chairmanship’s proposal to put forward a draft Ministerial Council Decision on water governance.. The representative expressed his gratitude to the incoming German Chairmanship and appreciated the choice of good governance as theme for the 2016 Economic and Environmental Cycle.

The representative of *France* emphasized that water governance and its implications for security and stability was a key issue both in the OSCE area and globally. She pointed out that although the Millennium Development Goal regarding access to water was achieved in 2010, more than 750 million people still do not have access to water protected from contamination. She noted that water was an issue within the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) on food security, health, environment and energy which will be held in Paris from November 30 to December 11, 2015. The representative emphasized that the Paris Conference was important due to the fact that the life of the planet was at stake. The representative later outlined the four components of the Paris Alliance.

The representative of *Switzerland* noted the contribution of the Serbian Chairmanship to significantly enhancing the potential of the Second Dimension, by devoting the 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum process to the topic of water governance as well as by, *inter alia*, organizing the field trip during the Second Preparatory Meeting in Belgrade. The representative mentioned that this process contributes to enhancing the overall role of the Organization as a facilitator and a political platform in addressing collective security. Furthermore, the representative mentioned that water should be regarded not only as a development issue but also as a security issue that can both trigger conflicts but that also has the potential to create opportunities for cooperation between the participating States. He encouraged pS to support the OSCE efforts to foster security through cooperative water governance and looks forward to the Ministerial Decision on water governance in Belgrade.

The representative of *Armenia* noted that global climate change was the main challenge to water governance which can only be addressed by joint efforts. He added that climate change reveals different vulnerabilities and water scarcity is one of them. The representative emphasized that unilateral actions in addressing water scarcity challenges should be avoided. In this context he

referred to the principle of the indivisibility of security in the OSCE area and added that this is particularly relevant in transboundary water governance. Furthermore, the representative underlined that in the absence of a multilateral framework, bilateral relations, or trust, transboundary water co-operation should be considered not only as a challenge but as an opportunity. He concluded that the OSCE remains as the platform for these discussions.

The representative of the *United States of America* highlighted the importance of the chosen theme of the Forum in increasing security and stability in the OSCE area and subscribed to the general remarks that emphasized the need for better co-operation across borders.

He further underlined the complexity of the topic of good water governance and mentioned that it would be important to focus the efforts on the issues where the OSCE could add its value rather than trying to tackle all the broad ranging aspects of water governance. The representative emphasized the United States encourages the participation of more representatives from the private sector in Economic and Environmental Forums and therefore supports the plans of the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship to involve the business community more in the events organised within the Second Dimension. The representative concluded underlining that it would be important to receive specific elements and identify practical steps that could be undertaken by the OSCE and by participating States in addressing water governance.

The representative of *Turkey* expressed his satisfaction with the discussions which highlighted the importance of water governance and addressed the question of how the OSCE could better contribute to the work in this area. Furthermore, he referred to the concerns raised regarding ramifications of climate change and ideas to address these concerns. He emphasized that the Concluding Meeting reaffirmed the importance of diligent co-operation between and among States to tackle with these issues. Referring to the role of international organizations, especially the OSCE in this regard, he underlined that it is essential for the OSCE to avoid duplication and to play a complementary role. The representative added that Turkey will engage in the discussions for a Ministerial Council deliverable as constructively as possible. In conclusion representative expressed full support to the plan which was presented by the incoming 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship.

The representative from *CAREC* expressed her satisfaction with the outcomes of the Forum noting that the topic of Disaster Risk Reduction was the top priority for Central Asia. She expressed full support to the idea, which was suggested during Session VI of the Forum, to set up a regional hub for an exchange of information, data and experience with regards to the national disasters. Furthermore, she stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation among regional and international organisations, institutions and funds working in this field.

*Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden* concluded the session noting that it would be very important to transfer advanced discussions which were held during the three days of the Forum into a constructed and comprehensive discussion and possibly decision on water governance during the Ministerial Council in Belgrade.

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# Annex I



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

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24 July 2014

Original: ENGLISH

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## **1012th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1012, Agenda item 4

### **Decision No. 1131**

#### **Theme, Agenda and Modalities for the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum**

The Permanent Council,

Pursuant to Chapter VII, paragraphs 21 to 32, of the Helsinki Document 1992; Chapter IX, paragraph 20, of the Budapest Document 1994; Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/04 of 7 December 2004; Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/06 of 26 July 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 743 of 19 October 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 958 of 11 November 2010; and Permanent Council Decision No. 1011 of 7 December 2011,

Relying on the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension (MC(11).JOUR/2) and Ministerial Council decisions related to the environment, energy and water management,

Building on the outcomes of past Economic and Environmental Forums, as well as on the results of relevant OSCE activities, including follow-up activities,

Decides that:

1. The theme of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum will be: “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”;
2. The Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum will consist of three meetings, including two preparatory meetings, one of which will take place outside of Vienna. The concluding meeting will be held from 14 to 16 September 2015 in Prague. These arrangements shall not set a precedent for future meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum. The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, will organize the above-mentioned meetings;
3. The agenda of the Forum will focus on the impact of the following topics on the comprehensive security of the OSCE area:
  - Water governance as a prerequisite for environmental sustainability and for economic and social prosperity and stability;

- Promotion of dialogue in good water governance within the OSCE area through sharing best practices and lessons learned;
  - Raising awareness of the importance of water governance at all levels;
  - Water governance within the context of disaster risk reduction.
4. The agendas of the Forum meetings, including timetables and themes of the working sessions, will be proposed and determined by the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, after being agreed upon by the participating States in the Economic and Environmental Committee;
5. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will review the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension. The review, to be integrated into the agenda of the Forum, will address OSCE commitments relevant to the theme of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;
6. The discussions at the Forum should benefit from cross-dimensional input provided by other OSCE bodies and relevant meetings organized by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, and from deliberations in various international organizations;
7. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will discuss current and future activities for the economic and environmental dimension, in particular the work in implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension;
8. The participating States are encouraged to be represented at a high level by senior officials responsible for shaping international economic and environmental policy in the OSCE area. Participation in their delegations of representatives from the business and scientific communities and of other relevant actors of civil society would be welcome;
9. As in previous years, the format of the Economic and Environmental Forum should provide for the active involvement of relevant international organizations and encourage open discussions;
10. The following international organizations, international organs, regional groupings and conferences of States are invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum: Asian Development Bank; Barents Euro-Arctic Council; Organization of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation; Central European Initiative; Collective Security Treaty Organization; Commonwealth of Independent States; Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia; Council of Europe; Council of the Baltic Sea States; Economic Co-operation Organization; Energy Community; Eurasian Economic Commission; Eurasian Economic Community; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; European Environment Agency; European Investment Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Green Cross International; European Investment Bank; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Energy Agency; International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; International Maritime Organization; International Monetary Fund; International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; International Committee of the Red Cross; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM; Organization of Islamic Co-operation; Regional Co-operation Council; Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Southeast European Cooperative Initiative; Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Shanghai Co-operation Organization; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development; United Nations

Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; UN Women; United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia; World Bank Group; World Health Organization; World Meteorological Organization; World Trade Organization; Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies; Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit; International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; United Nations Children's Fund; Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI); United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination; International Civil Defence Organization; World Food Programme; Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery; Inter-Parliamentary Union; Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC); and Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC); and other relevant organizations;

11. The OSCE Partners for Co-operation are invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;

12. Upon request by a delegation of an OSCE participating State, regional groupings or expert academics and business representatives may also be invited, as appropriate, to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;

13. Subject to the provisions contained in Chapter IV, paragraphs 15 and 16, of the Helsinki Document 1992, the representatives of non-governmental organizations with relevant experience in the area under discussion are also invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;

14. In line with the practices established over past years with regard to meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum, the outcomes of the preparatory meetings will be reviewed at the concluding meeting of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum. The Economic and Environmental Committee will further include the conclusions and policy recommendations of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum and the reports of the rapporteurs in its discussions so that the Permanent Council can take the decisions required for appropriate policy translation and follow-up activities.

## Annex II Opening Remarks

*Check against delivery*



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
The Secretariat**

**The 23<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

**“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”**

**CONCLUDING MEETING**

**Prague, 14-16 September 2015**

**OPENING ADDRESS**

**by Secretary General Lamberto Zanier**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,

I join our host in welcoming you to this Concluding Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. It is good to see so many high-level representatives of the OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, international, regional and non-governmental organizations, as well as from academia, civil society and the private sector with us today.

Since the First Preparatory Meeting of the Forum in January, there have been significant developments at the global level. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted by UN Member States in March 2015. In June consensus on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, a new framework for development financing was reached. And the United Nations also reached agreement on a new sustainable development agenda that will be adopted later this month at the Sustainable Development Summit in New York.

We are also only 10 weeks away from the Paris Climate Change Conference – COP21 – which aims to adopt a new, global agreement on climate change. Good water governance has an important role to play in achieving goals set in these processes. In this context, the year 2015 provides unparalleled opportunities for our Organization to explore synergies with our partners and take concerted action for a more sustainable and secure future.

Within the framework of this year’s Economic and Environmental Forum process, we have facilitated a comprehensive discussion on water governance and its potential for increasing security and co-operation in the OSCE area. I am confident that the deliberations during the preparatory meetings in Vienna and in Belgrade have advanced a deeper understanding of

water governance and its relationship with sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction. Over the next three days, we will devote further attention to these linkages in dedicated sessions.

Allow me to share a few points that I consider important in the context of this meeting's discussions.

1. Water is a **strategic resource** and an essential element of national and regional security. Growing water demand, pollution, and climate change put water resources under stress and set water availability at risk. In this respect, the OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, should make full use of the potential offered by water diplomacy and water governance to increase security and stability in our region and beyond.

2. Water is a **common good**. Governing water resources in a transboundary context requires mechanisms, norms and agreements that are equitable, adapted to the specific context and take local traditions and conditions into account. Fostering local ownership, developing trust and the political will to move forward together are essential conditions that a regional organisation such as ours can help advance.

3. The countries in the OSCE region have the advantage of a **legally binding convention** – the so-called *UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*, or, as it is often referred to, the Water Convention. **Legal and political co-operation** can mutually reinforce each other and contribute to achieving successful outcomes. There are a number of best practice examples in our region – some of them facilitated jointly by the OSCE and UNECE. [Following this opening session, UNECE will present their *Review Report on the implementation of OSCE commitments* in the field of water governance. This 3 comprehensive report has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Water Convention and is yet another concrete illustration of the lasting and fruitful partnership between our two organizations.]

4. The OSCE is well placed to support the participating States in various aspects of good water governance. They include:

- Establishing effective *inter-sectoral co-ordination* at local and national levels;
- Ensuring *transparent and accountable decision-making*;
- Enabling *stakeholder participation* inclusive of civil society, youth, women and men, as well as the private sector and academia;
- Improving *data and information sharing*; and
- Putting in place *sound regulatory frameworks*.

5. **Local communities** should be involved in addressing water governance issues and be part of confidence-building efforts because the effects of water challenges are often most acutely felt at the local level. The OSCE, including through its Field Operations and the network of 59 Aarhus Centers in 14 countries, already engages with local communities on issues relevant to water governance and - more broadly – environmental governance in many locations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will continue supporting good water governance in our region, in close partnership with other international stakeholders, as demonstrated by OSCE Secretariat participation in the OECD Water Governance Initiative.

In the follow-up to the Sendai Framework, the Basel Ministerial Council Decision “Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction” provides us with comprehensive guidance and we are taking concrete steps towards implementing our commitments.

Only a few weeks ago, together with the Serbian Chairmanship and the Government of Switzerland, we organized a seminar entitled “Co-operative water governance: catalyst for sustainable development and comprehensive security” at the 25th World Water Week in Stockholm. The seminar discussed water co-operation in South-Eastern Europe and the lessons learnt from the floods in May 2014; and featured the Dniester River Basin as a 4 successful example of bilateral water co-operation, in this case between Ukraine and Moldova, that was developed with the support of the OSCE and UNECE.

Finally let us turn back to the global agendas I mentioned a minute ago.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals represent a strong, ambitious, and visionary set of commitments. The OSCE can engage in areas such as water, climate change, energy, land degradation and disaster risk reduction, as well as gender equality, the promotion of inclusive societies and many others. My intervention at the upcoming UN Summit in New York will touch upon their linkages with security and the OSCE’s role.

Regarding the COP21, the agreement to be reached in Paris, if it is reached, has the potential to limit global warming and avoid catastrophic and irreversible consequences that would have severe adverse implications for security. We will support the “Road to Paris” by organizing an OSCE Security Day devoted to “Climate Change and Security” on 28 October in Vienna.

As for this Forum, I expect that it will help us identify and further articulate the OSCE’s role in the context of water governance, not least in view of the forthcoming Ministerial Council. But our discussions can also contribute to the larger debate on the contribution the OSCE can make to support the global process that will to an extent shape our agenda in the coming years and decades.

In conclusion, let me emphasise how much we appreciate the co-operation and partnerships we have built in the field of water governance with a number of international organizations, including in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). These partnerships continue to strengthen our joint engagement to increase environmental security in the OSCE area.

I look forward to a productive discussion over the next few days. Thank you.

## Annex III Keynote Speeches



### Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

#### The 23<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

**“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”**

#### CONCLUDING MEETING

**Prague, 14-16 September 2015**

**Keynote Address by**

**H.E. Ivica Dačić**

**Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE**

**First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**Republic of Serbia**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to speak today at the Concluding Meeting of the twenty-third Economic and Environmental Forum of the OSCE. On behalf of the Serbian Chairmanship let me express my gratitude to the Czech authorities for hosting this important event for so many years now.

Let me also warmly welcome our distinguished speaker, Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter, and the OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier.

I am also pleased to welcome representatives from the OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. This impressive group of participants underscores once again the role of this Forum as a unique platform for inclusive dialogue and for building strategic partnerships to address the most urgent economic and environmental challenges in the OSCE area.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Economic and Environmental dimension of the OSCE has traditionally been somewhat in the shadow of the other two dimensions. Taking into account the crisis in and around Ukraine and its economic underpinnings, as well as today’s migration challenges which are happening at our very doorstep – in the OSCE region, the Economic and Environmental Dimension potential is more than obvious. We need to step-up our collective efforts, in the so called Second Dimension of the OSCE, in order to promote security, stability, prosperity and co-operation in our region. By strengthening the Second dimension we will be able to

holistically tackle the Organization's comprehensive security approach and its relevance for a world going through economic hardships and social turmoil.

The possibilities for using the OSCE as a platform for dialogue within the economic-security nexus are vast. The OSCE can play a role in enabling us to return to shared perspectives and values with regard to economic co-operation and build bridges between regional and sub-regional formats. It is an important framework for the 57 participating States to identify ways for further strengthening OSCE-wide connectivity through co-operation, and this can go well beyond the economic field. Let us be honest, none of this will happen overnight. But the time has come for a thorough discussion on these issues.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. Although much has changed since 1975, the principles and commitments of this document and our collective responsibility to act in accordance with them remain as vital as ever for the OSCE and its participating States. In today's world, the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and its commitment to dialogue, co-operation, compromise and peaceful resolution of disputes are critical to rebuilding trust and confidence, which will help us create a positive agenda for the future.

The Economic and Environmental Forum process is an excellent example of this. By bringing together around the same table a wide array of different stakeholders – policy makers and experts, government officials, civil society and representatives of the private sector – the Forum facilitates the exchange of ideas and practical experiences on the most pressing economic and environmental issues affecting the OSCE region. Both strategic policy decisions and practical co-operation have emerged from the Forum's deliberations in past years. I hope that this year's Forum will be equally fruitful.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Serbian Chairmanship – in the framework of our joint work plan with Switzerland – has proposed to specifically focus on how good water governance can contribute to security and stability in the OSCE region, which can at times be a very challenging and politicized security issue. Although water is not a new topic for the OSCE, we believe that there is a need for greater political engagement, increased co-operation, and a better understanding of its complex connections with security and related challenges. Last year's devastating floods in the Western Balkans vividly demonstrated how important transboundary co-operation can be in addressing the negative impact of man-made and natural disasters.

The Serbian Chairmanship has focused on promoting dialogue and co-operation on good water governance within the OSCE area through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned and by raising awareness of the importance of water governance for security and stability at all levels – transboundary, national, and local. Good water governance should also include a gender and youth perspective to maximize environmental, social and economic benefits while contributing to increased security in the OSCE region.

The OSCE is the largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. By tackling contemporary challenges like water governance, we can make a tangible contribution to global security and prosperity in a regional context. The adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals later this month, and the UN conference on climate change in Paris later this year, both of which are closely connected with water, make today's deliberations all the more timely and necessary.

Considering the successful outcomes of the preparatory meetings, I am confident that this Forum will provide critical inputs for Ministerial Council decisions in Belgrade later this year on how to advance security and stability in the OSCE area through good water governance. In particular, I look forward to your proposals for possible future follow-up actions that the OSCE Secretariat and the OSCE field operations could take in this area. On our part, we will gather and summarize the most important deliverables from the First and Second Preparatory Meetings in Vienna and Belgrade, as well as this Concluding meeting, and start working towards a comprehensive Ministerial Council Decision on this topic.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In promoting good water governance, as in other areas of our work, an integrated and cross-dimensional approach and international co-operation are crucial to our common success. Only by working together can we make real progress towards identifying and implementing mutually beneficial solutions to enhance water governance and security in our region. Promoting water governance across the OSCE region means promoting co-operation among participating States, as well as with other international organizations, the private sector and civil society.

I trust that at the end of this Forum we will have a clearer picture of our priorities for engagement in water governance and the most effective ways for the OSCE to achieve them, as well as to renew its commitments and ensure adequate and effective follow-up.

In this spirit, I would like to once again encourage all of you to contribute your ideas for improving water governance and co-operation, which will help strengthen security for citizens, communities and countries throughout the OSCE region and beyond.

Thank you.

**Keynote Statement by  
Didier Burkhalter  
Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs  
23<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

“Swiss lines of action and OSCE avenues to transform water from a source of conflict into an instrument for peace”

**Prague, 14 September 2015**

Minister  
Secretary General  
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends

It is a great pleasure to return to Prague and participate again at the Economic and Environmental Forum of the OSCE. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today for two reasons:

First, Switzerland attaches great importance to the second dimension of the OSCE. We are committed to strengthening the economic and environmental field of co-operation, and this forum plays a major role in this.

Second, this year’s conference issue of water & security figures highly on the Swiss foreign policy agenda. We consider water a strategic component of our efforts to advance peace and security. Establishing water as an OSCE issue is therefore an objective that we very much support.

During the OSCE Security Day on Water last year, His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan argued that – and I quote – “an absence of water is the biggest and most effective weapon of mass destruction” – end of quote. In a similar vein, this year’s Global Risk Report of the World Economic Forum ranks water crises as the top global risk in terms of impact. The 900 decision-makers from the private and the public sector that were consulted for this report considered water crises to have a bigger potential impact than weapons of mass destruction and regional conflicts.

There is no doubt that water is an indispensable resource. Often, it is also related to major security risks. But water can also be – and this is my main message today – a powerful source of co-operation.

It is this notion of water as a driver for co-operation and development that is very much at the heart of Swiss water diplomacy. And it is this notion that should guide us when discussing the role of the OSCE in the field of water & security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Water is essential for public health, food security, energy, and ecosystems. Today, this vital resource is facing unprecedented challenges.

Population growth, urbanization, a growing global middle class and changes in production and consumption patterns are directly impacting our water resources.

While the world population grew fourfold in the 20th century, freshwater withdrawals grew nine times. According to this year's World Water Development Report by the UN, global water demand is projected to increase by another 55% by 2030. The world is projected to face a 40% global water deficit if current trends continue.

Climate change adds to the water supply challenge by increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Moreover, water resources are threatened by pollution. Millions of tons of sewage and sensitive waste are discharged every day directly into the world's aquatic ecosystems. This is impacting not only people's health. It is also causing immeasurable environmental degradation as well as economic loss.

Water is at the core of sustainable development. But water is not just a development issue. It is also a security issue. Competition over water can cause or fuel conflicts. Here, too, climate change exacerbates the risks of water-related conflicts, as it impacts on the variations in the distribution and availability of water resources.

Conflicts over water have already occurred in the Middle East, South Asia and other parts of the world. Water has even been used as a weapon of war, most notably in the Syrian conflict. In Syria, half of the production capacity of the country's water infrastructure has been lost as a result of war damage. On top of that, credible sources like the ICRC have documented numerous cases where water supplies for major cities such as Damascus or Aleppo have been cut deliberately by warring parties. Cutting water supplies has become a tactic of war to exert pressure on the other side. Such methods of warfare are a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

Ladies and gentlemen

The challenges and risks associated with water are indisputable. Water security is one of the major issues to address – for us and the generations that follow. This is why it is so important that we engage to transform water from a source of crisis into an instrument for peace.

The potential for co-operation is evident. Let me illustrate this again with an example from the Syrian war – a context where we see much of the worst of what humans can do. In a watershed a few hundred km from Damascus, a huge irrigation scheme is occupied by opposing factions. There is fighting along various unstable front lines all over the irrigation fields. Remarkably, what we are observing in this particular case is that opponents who are fighting during daylight, sit together and negotiate a fair quota of water in the evening – with priority given to human consumption, domestic use and subsistence agriculture in the entire irrigation fields.

This is of course not a role model of how we envisage water co-operation. But the Syria example indicates that cooperative water solutions can be found even in the most difficult of circumstances.

It is this belief in the power of water co-operation that has guided Switzerland throughout the four decades of our engagement in the field of water. It is the same belief that has prompted us recently to develop lines of action on “water & security”.

These lines of action provide a compass to the work of the Swiss foreign ministry in the field of water & security. But these lines of action are also meant to inspire others to work on water & security, which is why we will publish them today.

Our lines of action make the case for a comprehensive approach when addressing the nexus of water & security. Rendering water an effective source of co-operation and security requires a broad toolbox, ranging from instruments of development co-operation and humanitarian aid to peace promotion and international law. The lines of action also sketch the bilateral and regional avenues in our work on water & security, and they outline how we work in multilateral processes and with the private sector to achieve the best possible results.

Since 2009, Switzerland has been engaged in so-called “Blue Diplomacy”. Our engagement in water diplomacy relies on the long-standing experience and expertise Switzerland has in transboundary water co-operation, for instance in the Rhine basin, one of the most important cultural and economic axes in Europe.

We have become particularly active in the development of new mechanisms for water-policy negotiation and coordination in order to promote diplomacy over surface water and groundwater in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For instance, we are supporting efforts to strengthen good governance and management mechanisms in seventeen transboundary river basins worldwide, including in the wider Middle East.

In Central Asia, the integrated and sustainable management of water resources is key for development, peace and security. Switzerland is supporting several countries in the introduction of an Integrated Water Management approach, implementing pilot basin management examples and a comprehensive policy dialogue with the partners in the concerned ministries.

Following the request of five countries in the Central Asian region, Switzerland has also launched a hydro-diplomatic initiative. We appointed a special envoy for water in order to facilitate interstate dialogue and to contribute to the building of a regional vision and management mechanism of water-related challenges. After consultations by the Special Envoy and a visit I made to the region last year, the five Central Asian countries met in Basel to exchange views on regional water co-operation. A next meeting will take place early next year.

As for our most recent initiative, Switzerland will launch, together with partner States, a Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace in Geneva this November. The task of this panel will be to develop a set of proposals aimed at strengthening the global architecture to prevent and resolve water-related conflicts and to facilitate the use of water for building peace.

While independent, the Panel will work closely with the United Nations. UN-Water has accepted to become an observer. The Panel will build on Switzerland’s experience as well as on the wealth of actors in International Geneva who work on water-related issues. The Panel will be able to make full use of Geneva as an international hub for water diplomacy.

This finally brings me to the question of OSCE engagement in the field of water & security. Strengthening the OSCE's portfolio in water diplomacy and sustainable water management, in particular in relation to conflict prevention and confidence building, has been a joint priority of the consecutive Swiss and Serbian chairs.

The OSCE area features more than 150 river and lake basins that are shared by two or more States. The OSCE has built a strong track record on supporting participating States in fostering good and joint water governance. More can and should be done.

Why does Switzerland consider the OSCE a vital actor and multiplier in water governance? Three reasons:

First, OSCE know-how in cooperative security and its comprehensive approach linking the environment and security are of great value when it comes to water governance. The OSCE can act as a facilitator and political platform, as was the case when legal frameworks for water governance between Ukraine and Moldova and between Kirgizstan and Kazakhstan were worked out.

The OSCE can also bring in its own expertise. For example, two months ago, there was an OSCE regional training workshop in Almaty on gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution in Central Asia's water governance, financed by Switzerland, Finland, and Norway.

Second, the OSCE has partnerships with other institutions that have in-depth knowledge in water governance, such as the UN Economic Commission for Europe. Many water-related projects of the OSCE take place within the Geneva-based Environment and Security Initiative. Through this initiative, the OSCE and five partner organisations seek to transform shared environmental risks into opportunities for co-operation.

A recent example is the trans-boundary climate change adaptation strategy that Ukraine and Moldova endorsed this year in the context of their bilateral co-operation treaty regarding the Dniester basin. This strategy is the work of experts that was facilitated by the OSCE and UNECE. Switzerland encourages more such joint initiatives to follow.

The third and final reason why we see an important role for OSCE in water & security is that this organisation is close to the people and has a strong presence on the ground. The OSCE works with civil society. And many of its field missions have played important roles in promoting water co-operation.

Let me recall the efforts by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan to facilitate transboundary water co-operation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Another example are the roundtable discussions, organized by the OSCE presence in Albania and OSCE headquarters, on how Aarhus Centres could foster public participation in trans-boundary water management in the South Eastern Europe region. Switzerland regards the almost 60 OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres in 14 participating States as useful platforms to engage citizens, governments and the private sector in a dialogue on environmental challenges.

I also wish to commend the OSCE for its efforts to mitigate the serious water supply crisis in the conflict-affected regions in Ukraine. By facilitating dialogue and local ceasefires, the SMM has been essential in enabling the repairs of damaged water supply infrastructure. The humanitarian and economic Working Groups of the Trilateral Contact Group have played an important role too in helping restore water infrastructure across the conflict region.

Switzerland has complemented these OSCE efforts with bilateral assistance to improving access to drinking water in Ukraine by delivering chemicals for water treatment. My country has been the first (and the only one so far) to send humanitarian convoys across the Contact Line. Another convoy is in the making. All these measures to improve access to water across the Contact Line, whether by the OSCE or Switzerland, are to the benefit of the people and help rebuild confidence between the parties to the conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen

The OSCE can address water holistically – from disaster risk reduction to water diplomacy. This is very much in line with Switzerland’s approach to water and security. We encourage participating States to support the OSCE efforts to foster security through cooperative water governance. And we look forward to working with the Serbian Chairmanship and all of you in promoting water as an OSCE issue on the concrete road to the Belgrade Ministerial Council and on our common road to peace and security.

## **Annex IV: Closing Remarks**

### **23rd OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

**“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”**

**CONCLUDING MEETING  
Prague, 14 – 16 September 2015**

**Closing Statement by Ambassador Antje Leendertse, Head of the Task Force for the  
2016 German OSCE Chairmanship, Federal Foreign Office, Germany**

Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,

Let me start by thanking our Czech hosts for having us here in this beautiful setting!

I would also like to thank SG Lamberto Zannier, the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Dr. Yigitgüden and his team as well as the Serbian Chairmanship for convening and organizing this meeting.

I want to thank all of you for doing the important work in the EEF 2015. Your work highlighted not only a very important topic but also the work of the OSCE as a mediator and the project work of the field missions which deserve visibility.

The Topic of the EEF cycle 2015, “water governance”, was well-chosen and very timely indeed.

The sustainable development goals that are to be adopted in the U.N. in September highlight the importance of the water issue in its many facets for international co-operation, and rightly so.

Water is the basis of life, of human development. Good water governance and international co-operation are becoming ever more important in times of climate change, population growth, and global trends in economic growth of emerging markets, in pollution and in changing patterns of consumption and production.

Even in times long before we spoke of “globalization”, a rules-based and cooperative approach to using common resources - for example rivers in border regions - was crucial for avoiding conflict.

Today, this becomes ever more important and we have to work hard towards good governance, transparency and Cross-border co-operation.

They form the basis for confidence between participating states and therefore for stability and security.

All of this makes “water governance” a highly relevant policy area for the OSCE and for our common goals and commitments.

Germany has been very active in water diplomacy for a number of years.

In 2008, we started the so-called Berlin Process on water issues in Central Asia. Just last week ago, we hosted another ministerial conference on this issue in the Foreign Office in Berlin.

Representatives of all five Central Asian states agreed to enter into the third phase of this Process (2015-2017). We linked this initiative to OSCE work and had Dr. Yigitgüden participate and speak in Berlin.

As incoming chair, we encourage the institutions and field missions to continue their work on water governance issues, and encourage participating states to strengthen co-operation in this field.

Dear Colleagues,

Good Governance issues will more generally be a focus of our plans for the Chairmanship 2016.

Generally, we want to strengthen the economic and environmental dimension in the OSCE because we feel that we could draw on its potential to a higher degree: for concrete work to the benefit of our societies and for deepening and restoring confidence among participating states.

Our work will, of course, be based on existing commitments that make up the framework of the 2nd dimension (Helsinki Final Act, the document of the Bonn conference of 1990, Maastricht strategy of 2003, work of the Group of Friends of the Second Dimension (2009)). Within this framework, Germany will seek to highlight particularly the economic aspects of the 2nd dimension.

For the EEF cycle we have chosen the topic “Strengthening Stability and Security through co-operation on good governance” and the EEF decision mandates us to address three issues

- Good governance as a basis for business interaction and good investment climate as well as for the fight against corruption, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism;
- Good migration governance to support stable economic development in countries of origin, transit and destination;
- Good environmental governance to enable sustainable economic development;”

Good Governance and an economic angle on these issues will be the overarching theme to all the three.

What is true for water governance is true for other policy fields as well:

Good governance has implications for trust and confidence and thus for security and stability within and among participating states. It is also the basis of sustainable economic growth.

The dates for the two EEF preparatory meeting and next year’s Forum in Prague have been decided upon:

- the 1st Preparatory meeting will be in Vienna: 25.-26. January 2016.

- the 2nd Preparatory meeting will take place in Berlin: 19.-20. May 2016.
- the Concluding Meeting in Prague will take place from 14.-16. September 2016.

The precise agenda of the first preparatory meeting in Vienna will be presented to the Economic and Environmental Committee in Vienna this autumn in close co-operation with the Office of the Coordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

Finally, I would like to frame the more general thinking in Berlin on the second dimension with a few outlines: We would like to involve the business community more in the in the 2nd dimension work in order to make it more relevant.

We believe the business community has important views to share that can help participating States in conceptualizing economic policy and in tapping the potential of economic co-operation for their respective societies.

Their views can also help to take stock of existing barriers to sustainable connectivity and economic co-operation in the OSCE area.

“Connectivity” is a term which is used in many other multilateral contexts that deal with regional co-operation and cross-border infrastructure, for example in ASEM, ASEAN or in the context of the Western Balkans as part of the so called “Berlin Process” which we launched in 2014 and which just saw the second summit, in Vienna this August.

The way we understand it, “Connectivity” is a key-word for the connection between economic exchange, economic policy, trust, stability and security. And we believe, it can be a key term for better economic exchange between participating States.

We start from the assumption that participating States continue to share an interest to stay engaged in dialogue on economic matters in order to strive for better living conditions for their societies and for better co-operation and security vis-à-vis their neighbors.

Perhaps in this context it would also be helpful to look beyond the borders of the OSCE eastwards. Trade and economic exchanges are of course already taking place across the OSCE area, predominantly so in rules-based ways. But we would give an impetus to deeper discussion on how to further practically improve them, and involve the business community for that.

We are therefore thinking of organizing a Chairmanship Event that involves the business community and could address issues of “Connectivity”:

For example: issues of transport infrastructure, issues in border and customs administration, and other practical and policy issues which are all relevant to foreign investment, trade, economic growth as well as for combatting corruption and other aspects of good governance in the OSCE space. We want to highlight these issues from a practical and results-oriented point of view.

This would go hand in hand with projects that are already being carried out by OSCE field missions, for instance on trade facilitation or anti-corruption.

We should use the OSCE’s trade mark of being a forum for exchange of experiences with a broad membership better than in the past to advance dialogue on how economic governance can be improved.

Dear Colleagues,

Everyone knows these are challenging times and there is only so much that the Chairmanship country can do.

Having said that:

We will do our very best to help renewing and rebuilding dialogue, trust and security. And we want to have this dialogue also in the second dimension, and to use the second dimension for that dialogue.

The incoming chairmanship is looking forward to working with you, on the second dimension as well as the other dimensions and on the crucial regional issues in the OSCE.

Thank you.

## **23RD OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

### **“Water governance in the OSCE area: Increasing security and stability through co-operation” CONCLUDING MEETING Prague, 14-16 September 2015**

#### **Closing Statement by Ambassador Vuk Žugić Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organizations**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to speak on behalf of the Serbian Chairmanship at the closing of the twenty third OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. First of all, I would like to thank all participants for the fruitful and lively discussions.

Over the last three days, the Forum has once more proved its added value in developing relevant political recommendations addressing common concerns and interests in the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

This year's Forum in particular has strengthened and enhanced focus on water governance in the OSCE region.

We had an ambitious agenda covering an extensive range of issues. The two thought provoking keynote speeches by CiO Dacic and Minister Burkhalter as well as the many other interventions underscored the urgency of increased co-operation on water governance within the OSCE region and the importance of a well-defined approach.

At the beginning of this year, as you all know, the Serbian Chairmanship identified water governance as its priority in the economic and environmental dimension. The discussions over the last three days have demonstrated that this was the right approach since it clearly showed that water is not only about development, health and food, but that there is also a clear connection to security related challenges in the OSCE region.

The catastrophic floods in the Western Balkans last year provided a powerful example of how vulnerable we are to natural disasters, and that they are not contained by national borders.

The floods have also demonstrated that water governance is critical to security and stability and can only be implemented successfully through co-operation across national borders.

Ensuring a framework for multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder coordination in water governance is a necessity, and not only States, but also civil society, the private sector and local communities must all play an active role.

At this Forum, we heard numerous positive examples of how we can cope with water-related challenges. These successes had three things in common: they received the necessary attention at the political level, adequate resources were invested to address them, and they were the result of genuine co-operation and partnership at all levels.

This approach is very much in line with the relevant provisions in the Helsinki Final Act's Chapter on Co-operation in the Field of Economics, Science and Technology and of the Environment, which gives a wide range of opportunities for participating States to develop mutual co-operation in the area of water governance. Building on this co-operation, we put water-related issues high on the OSCE agenda by including water scarcity and sustainable water management in our joint Serbian-Swiss work plan last year, and I have been very pleased to see how effectively this year's Forum has fostered dialogue and joint action on water governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to share some observations with you which resulted from the deliberations we had during the course of the Forum.

First: The presentations and debates in the First and Second Preparatory Meetings, as well as the Concluding meeting, have clearly shown the close link between water governance and security. Water is a scarce resource that is critical to the well-being of people, the security of whole communities and regions without regard to national borders and at the same time it has the potential to deeply affect the stability of affected countries.

Second: Water governance is not only a relevant issue in relations between States, but it also concerns many different stakeholders within a State. Cross-sectorial dialogue, as mentioned by several speakers, is needed to ensure appropriate use of water resources. Integrating all stakeholders, particularly women and youth, in decision-making processes is critical to good water governance. The OSCE should use its unique expertise to increase efforts to strengthen national processes for stakeholders' engagement.

Third: Political will is critical to successful water governance when dealing with issues of security and stability. Although technologies for more efficient water use are increasingly available, technology alone is sometimes not enough. This is why we devoted the Forum to water governance rather than water management. By discussing and addressing governance related aspects like decision-making processes, transparency, and division of competencies we can strengthen security and stability through water issues.

Fourth: The discussions during the preparatory and concluding parts of the Forum indicate a strong interest among participating States for the area of water governance. As we move towards the Belgrade Ministerial Council Meeting in December, we must maintain the momentum and translate this political will into a sound and well-focused document, reaffirming and underpinning the OSCE mandate in the area of water governance.

Within such a document, several following points could be included, among others:

Implementation of the principles of good water governance, in particular to broaden public participation and transparency in water governance.

- Increased use of environmental co-operation, including in the area of water, as a tool in diminishing tensions as part of a broader effort to prevent conflict, build mutual confidence and promote good neighbourly relations.
- Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Increased investments in educating young generations on water governance, and strengthening of its collaboration with youth organisations
- Promotion of a gender perspective in its activities related to water governance and water diplomacy
- Coordination of water-related activities with other international and regional organizations active in this area
- A mandate for the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) to expand the role of the OSCE in water diplomacy and continue its support for transboundary water co-operation.
- A mandate for the OCEEA to make increased use of co-operation in the area of water as a tool for de-escalating tensions, preventing conflict, building mutual confidence and promoting good neighbourly relations.

The Serbian Chairmanship will also advocate for a political declaration in the area of sustainable development at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade. The Forum's discussions repeatedly referred to the importance of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals and the crucial role that water plays in achieving them. The OSCE as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter should also contribute to this global process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Serbian Chairmanship I would like to thank again all participants for their significant contributions and active involvement. Let me thank in particular the OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, and his team, as well as the OSCE Prague Office for their excellent co-operation in preparing and coordinating this year's Forum. I would also like to warmly thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for once again hosting the concluding part of the Forum in this beautiful and always fascinating city.

Let me also express my gratitude to the speakers, panellists, moderators and rapporteurs for their valuable inputs, the economic and environmental officers from OSCE field operations for their outstanding efforts, and our interpreters for their exceptional services.

I wish you all a safe trip home.

Thank you.

## Annex V: Annotated Agenda



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
The Secretariat

Vienna, 3 November 2015

### 23<sup>RD</sup> OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability  
through co-operation”

#### CONCLUDING MEETING

**Prague, 14 – 16 September 2015**

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretánské nám: 5, 118 00 Prague

#### DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

**Monday, 14 September 2015**

**09:30 – 11:30**            **Opening Plenary Session** (*open to the press*)

**Moderator:** **Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Rapporteur:** **Ms. Jenniver Sehring**, Environmental Affairs Advisor, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Welcoming remarks:**

- **H.E. Jakub Kulhánek**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic
- **H.E. Lamberto Zannier**, Secretary General, OSCE

**Keynote Speeches:**

- **H.E. Ivica Dacic**, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
- **H.E. Didier Burkhalter**, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

**Selected topics:**

- Good water governance as a response to increasing water challenges
- Water governance as a tool to increase resilience to environmental challenges and disasters

**Statements by Delegations / Discussion**

**11:30 – 12:00** Coffee/Tea break

Opening of the Exhibition „Helsinki +40“ by H.E. Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General, (ground floor)
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**12:00 – 13:00** **Review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of water governance**

**Selected topics:**

- Presentation of the UNECE Review Report
- Forward looking discussion on the Review Report's main findings and recommendations

**Moderator:** **Ambassador Dejan Šahović**, Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras**, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak**, Acting Director of Environment Division, UNECE
- **Ms. Sonja Koeppel**, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, UNECE

**Discussion**

**13:00 – 14:30** Lunch break

**14:30 – 16:00** **Session I: The benefits of good water governance across different levels**

**Selected topics:**

- Co-operative approaches as a factor for security and stability
- Water-food-energy-ecosystems-nexus
- Framework for multi-level, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder co-ordination
- Measuring the benefits of water governance and co-operation

**Moderator:** **Ambassador Thierry Béchet**, Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OSCE

**Rapporteur:** **Ms. Dana Bogdan**, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Eugene Z. Stakhiv**, lecturer and researcher at John Hopkins University, and visiting scholar at the US Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, United States
- **Mr. Ahmet Saatci**, President, Turkish Water Institute
- **Ms. Aziza Akhmouch**, Head - Water Governance Programme, Regional Development Policy Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD
- **Mr. Massimo Cozzone**, Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- **Mr. Gazmend Turdiu**, Deputy Secretary General, Regional Co-operation Council

## Discussion

**16:00 – 16:30** Coffee/Tea break

**16:30 – 18:00** **Session II: Water governance at national level – best practices and new approaches in the OSCE region**

### Selected topics:

- Best practices in OSCE participating States
- Methods for monitoring and assessing
- Fostering transparency and anti-corruption in the water sector
- Sustainable financing of water management

**Moderator:** **Ambassador Andreas Papadakis**, Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Uros Milanovic**, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Berdi Berdiyev**, Head of the Department of Coordination of the Ecological Programmes, Ministry of Nature Protection, Turkmenistan
- **Mr. Rob Uijterlinde**, Dutch Association of Regional Water Authorities, The Netherlands
- **Ms. Lotte Feuerstein**, Programme Coordinator, Water Integrity Network, Germany
- **Ms. Tatsiana Minzhurava**, Chief Expert, Ministry of Natural Resources, Belarus

18:30

Reception hosted by the Serbian 2015 OSCE Chairmanship

**Tuesday, 15 September 2015**

**09:30 – 11:00**

**Session III: Water governance and co-operation at transboundary level: lessons learnt for water diplomacy**

**Selected topics:**

- The role of regional organizations for enhanced water co-operation
- Water diplomacy as a tool for conflict prevention and trust building
- Good practices in information and data sharing
- Bottom-up approaches and public participation in transboundary context

**Moderator:** **Mr. Jan Dusik**, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk**, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Ms. Marina Seliverstova**, Head of the Federal Agency of Water Resources, Russian Federation
- **Mr. Oliver Magnin**, Water Policy Advisor, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation
- **Mr. Sulton Rakhimzoda**, First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan
- **Mr. Benedikt Mandl**, Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR Secretariat
- **Mr. Ramiro Martínez**, General Coordinator, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), Spain

**Discussion**

**11:00 – 11:30**

Coffee/Tea break

**11:30 - 13:00**

**Session IV: Panel debate - Water governance and sustainable development**

**Selected topics:**

- Water governance for socio-economic development and environmental protection
- Water and security in the context of the post-2015 Development Agenda

- Effective institutional and legislative frameworks for good water governance at all levels

**Moderator:** **Ms. Biljana Filipović**, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

**Rapporteur:** **Ms. Nino Malashkhia**, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Jan Dusik**, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe
- **Mr. Andrei A. Begeneev**, Member of the Committee on Ecology and Nature, Majlis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- **Dr. Marian Patrick Neal**, SIWI, Manager UNESCO-Centre for Water Co-operation
- **Dr. Wilhelm Vogel**, Head of the Unit Surface Water, Austrian Environmental Agency

**Discussion**

**13:00 – 14:30** Lunch break

**14:30 – 16:00** **Session V: Facilitating effective water governance in the context of new environmental challenges**

**Selected topics:**

- Water in the context of the global climate change agenda
- Adaptation to new environmental challenges in transboundary river basins
- Adaptation to new environmental challenges at community level

**Moderator:** **Ms. Marta Bonifert**, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Bernd Forster**, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Benjamin Pohl**, Senior Project Manager, Adelphi, Germany
- **Mr. Yuriy Nabyvanets**, Deputy Director on Science, Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute
- **Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev**, Executive Director, CAREC
- **Mr. Paolo Angelini** Head of Delegation to the Alpine Convention, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

**Discussion**

**16:00 – 16:30** Coffee/Tea break

**16:30 - 18:00** **Session VI: Governing waters for effective disaster risk reduction**

**Selected topics:**

- Co-operative water governance as a catalyst for preventive action
- Water and security in the context of the follow-up to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- Water-related DRR as a tool for trust-building at all levels, including with its gender aspects

**Moderator:** **Ambassador Vuk Žugić**, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Darren Perdue**, Political Officer, United States Mission to the OSCE

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Pavel Puncochar**, Director General, Water Section Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic
- **Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss**, Chair Global Water Partnership
- **Mr. Jan Lueneburg**, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia
- **Ms. Paola Albrito**, Head of the Regional Office for Europe, UNISDR
- **Mr. Jože Papež**, Head of Development and Projects Department, Hidrotehnik, Slovenia

**Discussion**

**18:00** **Reception hosted by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

**Wednesday, 16 September 2015**

**09:00 – 10:30** **Session VII: Strengthening participation and awareness raising for effective water governance**

**Selected topics:**

- The growing role of civil society– experience from OSCE participating States
- Fostering participation and raising awareness: the role of Aarhus Centers
- The role and engagement of the private sector in addressing water challenges

**Moderator:** **Ms. Désirée Schweitzer**, Deputy Co-ordinator / Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Zhaslan Nurtazin**, Associate Environmental Governance Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Ms. Biljana Filipović**, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia
- **Mr. Aleksandar Perovic**, Manager, Aarhus Centre Niksic, Montenegro
- **Mr. Andreas Beckmann**, Managing Director of WWF, Danube – Carpathian Programme

**Discussion**

**10:30 – 11:00**            Coffee/Tea break

**11:00 – 12:30**            **Concluding Plenary Session – Follow-up to the 23<sup>rd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

- General Discussion
- Closing statements

**Moderator:** **Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden**, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Rapporteur:** **Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras**, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Speakers:**

- **Ambassador Vuk Žugić**, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship
- **Ambassador Antje Leendertse**, Head of the Task Force for the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship, Federal Foreign Office, Germany