How does the UNECE Water Convention support transboundary water cooperation on the ground

Dr. Alexandros Kolliopoulos  
Vice-Chair of the Legal Board of the Water Convention  
Member of the Legal Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece
What has been done in this work area? Some achievements

• Chu-Talas – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan
  - broadened cooperation, enhanced institutional framework

• Drin – Western Balkans
  - strategic shared vision – MoU signed

• Kura – Azerbaijan, Georgia
  - draft bilateral agreement negotiated

• Dniester – Republic of Moldova, Ukraine
  - basin treaty signed plus strengthened cooperation on information exchange, climate change adaptation
Central Asia
Chu-Talas – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

• Need for the establishment of a bilateral commission
• Relevant project supported by UNECE and UNESCAP
• Implementation of a pilot project on climate change
• Inclusion of environmental components as a considerable challenge
Drin MoU (article 2)

Objective: “The Parties, though their Ministers and their representatives, commit to promote joint action for the coordinated integrated management of the shared water resources in the Drin Basin, as a means to safeguard and restore to the extent possible the ecosystems and the services they provide, and to promote sustainable development across the Drin Basin”
Short term priority actions

• Knowledge basis about the Drin Basin (EU WFD)
• Establishment of regular exchange of relevant information among Riparians
• Cooperation in the field of flood management
• Coordination mechanisms - The Drin Core Group
Medium term priority actions

- Science based consensus on key transboundary priorities
- Drin Basin Water Monitoring Program and exchange of information.
- Signing of an agreement and the establishment of a Basin Commission.
Long term priority action

• Development of a Drin Basin Management Plan in accordance with the EU WFD and the UNECE Water Convention
Coordinating Bodies

MoU
Governing Body

Meeting of Parties
Ministers responsible for water and environmental management

Drin Core Group
- Ministries from Riparians responsible for water and environmental management
- Prespa Park Management Committee
- Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee
- Lake Skadar-Shkoder Commission
- UNECE
- Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean
- Mediterranean Information Center for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development

Expert Working Group on WFDI
Expert Working Group on MIE
Expert Working Group on BE

Drin Core Group Secretariat
Draft Action Plan for the implementation of the MoU

• Coordination mechanisms
• The knowledge basis about the Drin Basin.
• Information exchange
• Flood risk preparedness, management and support.
• Institutional strengthening on IWRM
• Public participation and stakeholders engagement.
Main challenges and lessons learnt

• The UNECE Water Convention as an important framework for cooperation
• Synergies between different actors should be identified and exploited
• Funding important but limited amounts sufficient in the initial stages of cooperation
• The way ahead: support the development of basin-wide cooperation outside the UNECE region