



"Enhancing security through water diplomacy: The role of the OSCE"

Date: 8 July 2014

Location: Hofburg, Neuer Saal

Concept Note

Marking the 25th year of the Sofia meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which laid the basis for a major international legal instrument on water – the UNECE Water Convention -, this Security Days event will provide a platform for discussion on “the role of the OSCE in enhancing security through water diplomacy.

The Event aims to take stock of what the OSCE has done so far in this field, showcase OSCE success stories, trigger active engagement of OSCE Partners for Co-operation, generate opportunities for exchange of best practices and lessons learned across regions, and identify the future direction of action for conflict prevention and confidence building. In an interactive format, it will bring in the perspectives of governments, NGOs, academia, business and entrepreneurs on “water and security” and the role of water diplomacy.

Background:

The 1989 Sofia Meeting on the Protection of the Environment¹ organized by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) paved the way for the major international legal instrument on water – the “UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes”.

Since then, fostering water co-operation and security remained high on the list of priorities of the OSCE. The 2003 Maastricht Strategy Document for the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension refers to the need for co-operation for sustainable management of shared natural resources, including water. The annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum process has focused on water issues at several occasions: Water issues first became a focus in 2002 at the 10th Forum, where co-operation for the sustainable use and protection of quality of water was the main topic. Later, in 2007 the 15th Forum concentrated on the key challenges to environmental security in the OSCE region, among which water management

¹The Sofia meeting concluded, i.a., as follows: “*The participating States agree on the need to define principles for a sustainable use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes as well as to elaborate arrangements to protect them from pollution. For this aim the participating States recommend that the ECE elaborate a framework convention, whereby existing bilateral and multilateral agreements on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes, as well as ongoing activities and completed work in other fora, such as the ECE Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems and the United Nations International Law Commission, should be taken into account*”.

was an important issue. As a result of the Forum, the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Security was adopted along with a Ministerial Decision on water management which recommended to enhance the close cooperation with the UNECE and other international organizations in the sphere of water management, called upon participating States to strengthen co-operation over water management, and encouraged implementation of international instruments and OSCE commitments. Finally, the 16th Forum in 2008 touched upon maritime and inland waterways co-operation in order to increase security and promote the protection of the environment. In 2014, water is addressed within the Forum focus on responding to environmental challenges, and sustainable water management was selected as a priority theme of the Swiss and Serbian OSCE chairmanships for 2014 and 2015.

In light of the above, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities has, since 2002, been actively engaged in enhancing the dialogue on water issues and implementing projects that led to progress in water governance and transboundary co-operation. The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)² has been a unique instrument for co-ordinated international action in this field.

Objective and main expected outcomes of the event:

- The event will highlight the **importance of strengthening transboundary water co-operation and water diplomacy** as an effective tool to enhance security and stability in the OSCE area;
- The event will take stock of the **role the OSCE** has played so far in promoting water co-operation and identify future direction of action for **conflict prevention and confidence building**;
- The event will provide an opportunity to demonstrate the **security-related benefits of water co-operation with concrete examples**, also with regard to mitigation of the risks of **water-related disasters and adaptation to climate change** in transboundary basins;
- The event will help **exchange of experience from different transboundary basins**, and encourage partnerships between participating States, Partners for Co-operation and relevant non-governmental stakeholders in the area of water;
- The event will facilitate **promotion of transboundary water agreements** within the OSCE area as an important tool for security and stability.

² The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is a partnership of OSCE, UNDP, UNEP, UNECE, the Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), and NATO as an associated partner that provides an integrated response to environment and security challenges. The mission of ENVSEC is to contribute to the reduction of environment and security risks through strengthened cooperation among and within countries in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus, and South-Eastern Europe.

Agenda

09:00-09:30 Registration

09:30 -09:45 Opening and Welcome

- Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General
- Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE, 2014 OSCE Swiss Chairmanship

09:45 -11:00 Keynote statement: “Water and security: Regional cooperation in the global commons”

- HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Introduction by Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General

Discussion moderated by Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00: Panel 1: A security perspective on water

Moderator: Hinrich Thoelken, Head of Division on Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, German Federal Foreign Office

Topics:

- Perspectives of different stakeholders (academia, government, international organisations, private sector and civil society) to water and security issues
- The role of water diplomacy as an effective tool to enhance security and stability in the OSCE area
- Future challenges to water security, especially with regard to climate change and natural disasters, and the role of OSCE

Panelists:

- Parviz Davlatzoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan
- Lucas Beck, Partner, Hydrosolutions GmbH

- Jaana Husu-Kallio, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Chairperson of the Finnish party of the Joint Finnish-Russian Commission on the Utilization of Frontier Waters
- Li Lifeng, Director Freshwater Programme, WWF International

Questions and Answers

13:00 – 14:00 Buffet lunch

14:00 -15:30 Panel 2: Water, security and the OSCE: taking stock of past experiences and lessons learnt in transboundary co-operation

Moderator: Bo Libert, Regional Environmental Adviser, UNECE

Topics:

- Best practices and lessons learnt in supporting water co-operation;
- Security-related benefits of transboundary water co-operation:
 - political (transparency, public participation, building trust and confidence)
 - safety, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction (better forecasts, better state of infrastructure, flood prevention)
 - socio-economic (reduced cost of damages, cost-sharing, positive side effects on economic development)
 - environmental (protection of biodiversity and eco-systems)

Panelists:

- Miroslav Jenča, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Head of the UN Regional Centre for preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
- Dejan Komatina, Secretary, International Sava River Basin Commission
- Ilya Trombitsky, Eco-TIRAS International Environmental Association of Dniester River Keepers
- Desiree Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head Environmental Activities, OSCE

Questions and Answers

15:30 -16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:30 Concluding Panel: The future role of the OSCE in water and security

Topics:

- Priorities for further OSCE engagement in water diplomacy
- Expectations from OSCE participating States and other stakeholders on future OSCE role
- Water and security in the context of Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda
- Adaptation to climate change and water security

Moderator: Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General

- Daniel Guyader, Head of Global Issues and Counter-Terrorism Division, European External Action Service
- Andras Szöllösi-Nagy, Rector, UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, Co-Chair of the Political Process Commission of the 7th World Water Forum 2015
- Iskandar Abdullaev, Executive Director, Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC)
- Bart Devos, President, World Youth Parliament for Water

Questions and Answers