



***Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)***

Seventh Session

November 17–19, 2015, Budapest, Hungary

Statement by


*the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
delivered by Dr. Radoje Lausevic, Deputy Executive Director*

Mr. Chair, delegates, ladies and gentlemen: On behalf of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (www.rec.org) I would like to thank the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and our host, the Hungarian Government, for their invitation to this conference which marks the convention's transition into a global legal and intergovernmental framework for transboundary water cooperation.

Although the countries present different economic, cultural and historical realities, the countries are interconnected by their rivers, lakes and seas and they are facing common challenges. The Regional Environmental Center (REC) acknowledges that the Water Convention provides a sound framework for supporting effective transboundary water cooperation, especially at regional and local level, to ensure long-term sustainability and to prevent possible negative transboundary impacts in the basins.

The Regional Environmental Center is known for being actively involved in a majority of the UNECE Water Convention activities and contributing to its introduction in the REC's 32 partner countries in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. In this respect, the REC has facilitated improved transboundary cooperation in the Sava and Drina River basins (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia). Allow me to report on the workshop organised by the REC with the support of the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea and the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat. The workshop was held on November 16, 2015, as a side event to this COP and focused on promoting transboundary water cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region on the basis of the Water Convention. The event provided a platform to take stock of the progress achieved by MENA countries towards accession to the Water Convention, and to discuss common issues related to accession and implementation as well as next steps and needed actions. One of the most important messages of the workshop is that MENA countries understand the added value of the UNECE Water Convention and are seriously examining its adoption.

From our side, the REC is ready to coordinate with the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat on our ongoing regional project in the MENA region supported by Sweden: "Sustainable Use of Transboundary Water Resources and Water Security Management" (<http://www.watersum.rec.org/>), the main aim of which is to promote the more



sustainable use of water resources and local water security action planning in the MENA region.

To conclude, in its 2016–2020 Strategy the REC commits to giving increased attention to water-related issues. With its 25 years of expertise, the REC offers:

1. a neutral platform for exchanging information, experience and best practices;
2. expertise in transboundary cooperation in order to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable management of water resources;
3. a network for facilitating the exchange of experience and needs related to Water Convention accession and implementation; and
4. a mechanism for multi-stakeholder and participatory dialogue on integrated river basin management.

The REC is therefore ready to continue supporting strategic partnerships for the effective implementation of the 1992 UNECE Water Convention.

Thank you for your attention.