



How the UNECE Water Convention can help to address the water/food/energy nexus

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Transboundary nexus

- **Water cooperation has never been on water per se**

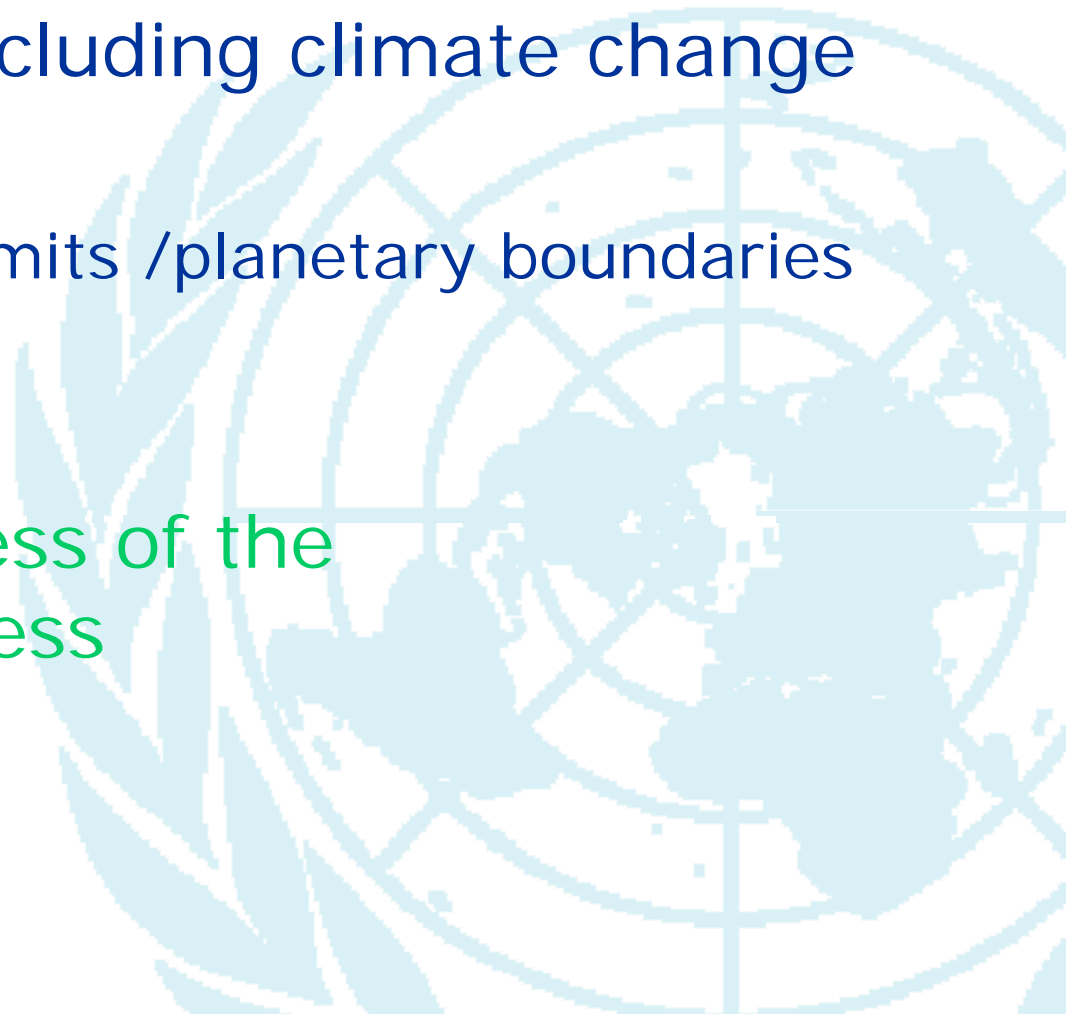
One or more economic driver(s)

Only in the 1990s the focus shifted to sustainable development and management of natural resources



What is different?

- Global drivers including climate change
 - ⇒ Sustainability limits /planetary boundaries
 - ⇒ Security risks
- Greater awareness of the interconnectedness



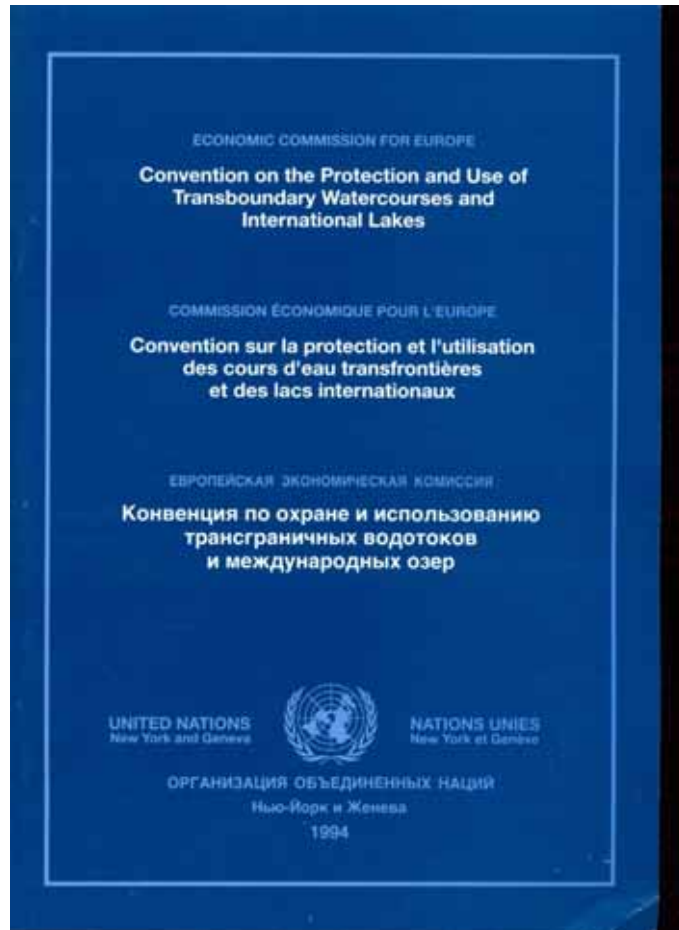
What does the nexus entail in the transboundary context?

- **Finding a balance: address and reduce trade offs and increase synergies**
 - Increased understanding and dialogue
 - Effective institutions and legal frameworks
 - Decisions support tools
 - Regulations / economic tools
 - Sharing / solidarity
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Is the current cooperation able to harness the nexus?

- Missing agreements/institutions
 - Limited mandate of existing institutions
 - Composition of institutions and decision making processes
 - Weak enforcement capacity
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The Water Convention

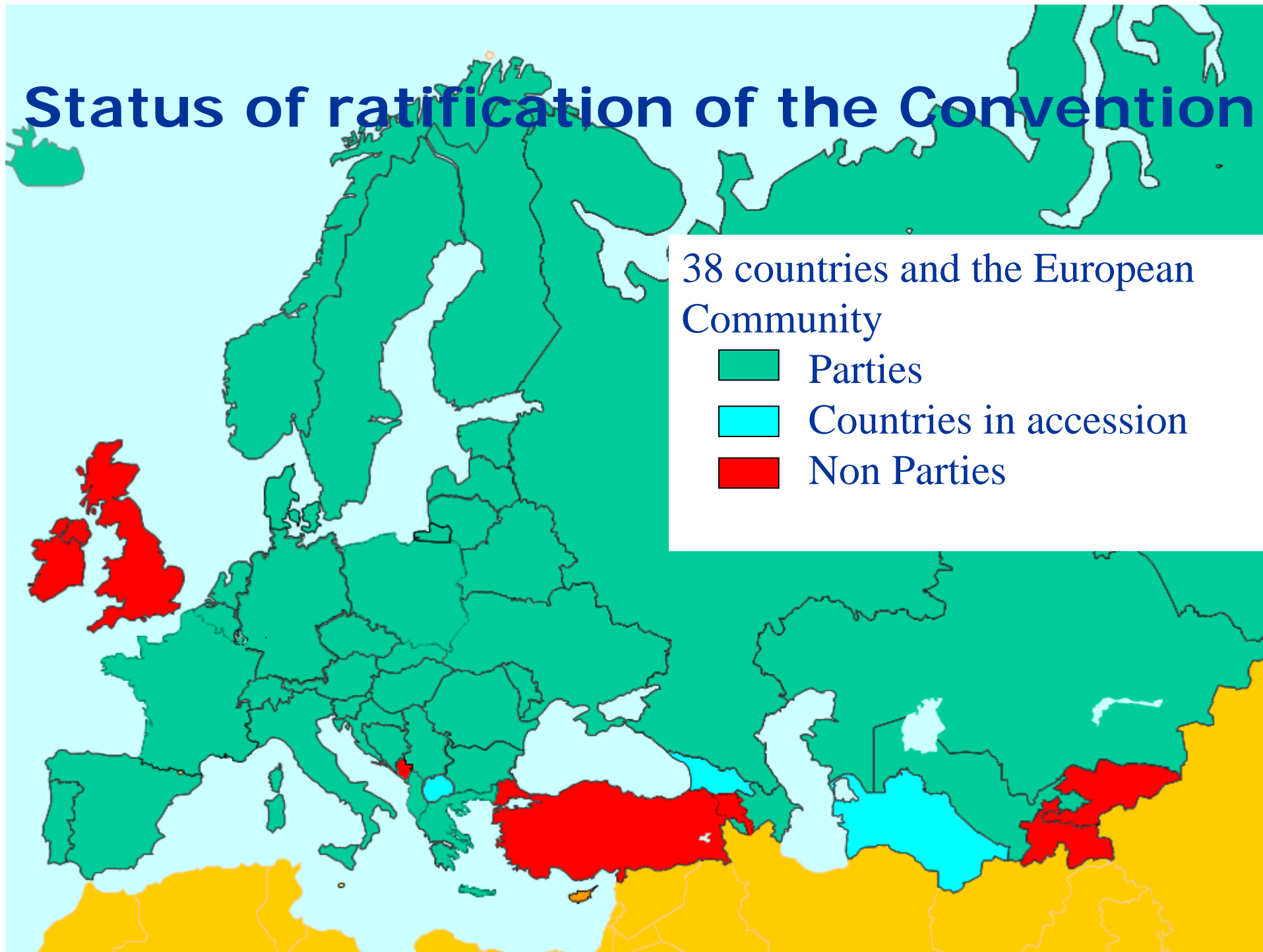


- Signed on 17 March 1992
- Entered into force on 6 October 1996

Status of ratification of the Convention

38 countries and the European Community

-  Parties
-  Countries in accession
-  Non Parties



2003 Amendment



- Opening up the Convention to non-UNECE states
- Strong commitment to entry into force by 2012
 - = > Promote exchange
 - = > Raise awareness and build capacity
 - = > Start working together

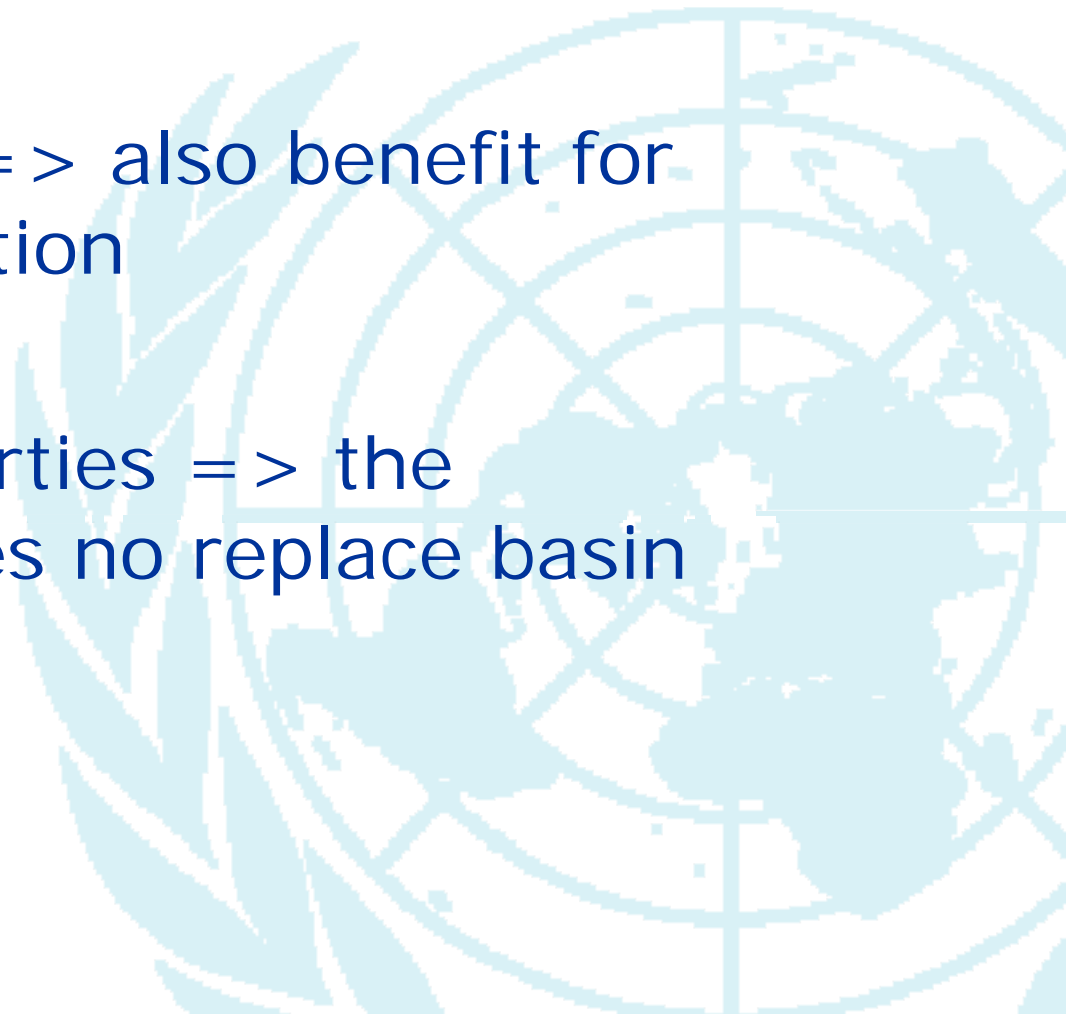
Main obligations under the Convention



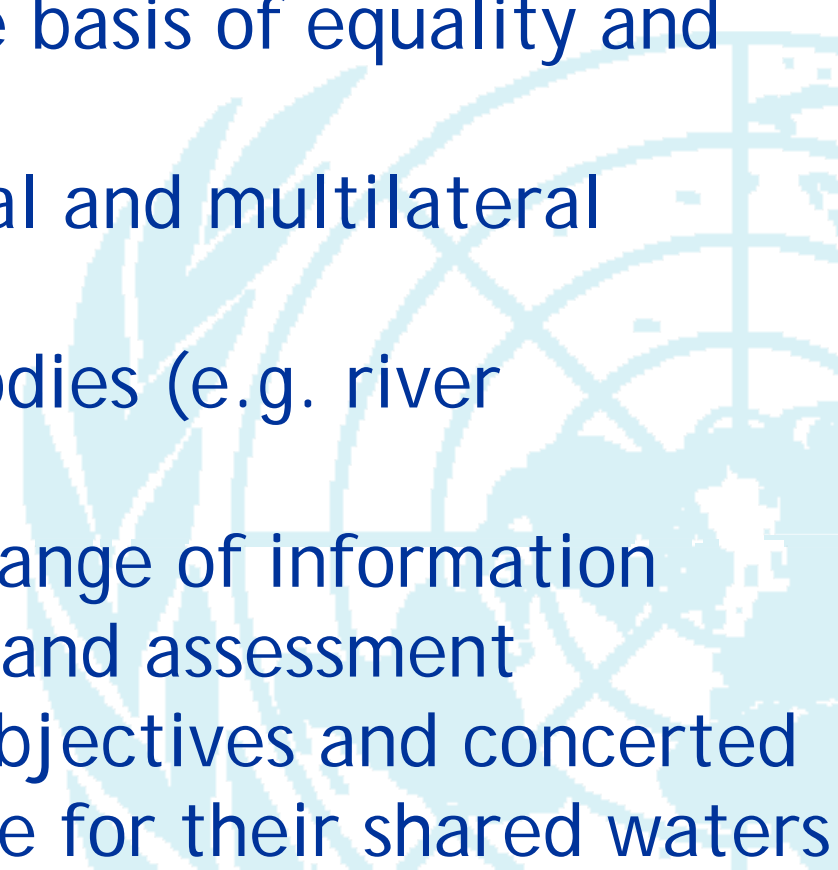
- Protection of transboundary waters by preventing, controlling and reducing transboundary impacts
 - Reasonable and equitable use of transboundary waters
 - Obligation to cooperate through agreements and joint institutions
- = > **Overall objective of sustainability**

Two categories of obligations

- For all Parties => also benefit for national legislation
- For Riparian Parties => the Convention does not replace basin agreements



Provisions relating to Riparian Parties

- Cooperate on the basis of equality and reciprocity
 - Conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements
 - Establish joint bodies (e.g. river commissions)
 - Consult and exchange of information
 - Joint monitoring and assessment
 - Elaborate joint objectives and concerted action programme for their shared waters
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Key aspects

- Due diligence nature of the obligation to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts
 - “All appropriate measures” depend on potential risk involved, capacity of the country...
 - Catchments area concept => IWRM: surface and groundwaters, and links to the recipient seas; quantity and quality
 - Look at economic, social and environmental dimensions of water
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In practice...

- Played a crucial role in the region in supporting cooperation
- Most of the existing agreements are modelled on the Convention (Danube, Sava, Bug, Kazakh-Russian, Lake Peipsi, also the Water Framework Directive)
- Influenced the work of river commissions





Not only rights and obligations (1)

Becoming a Party = joining an institutional regime

Progressive development of the Convention

Forum for bilateral and multilateral cooperation

Sharing of experience and good practices





Not only rights and obligations (2)

Capacity building

Projects on the ground

Address requests on clarifications

A Party is not left alone in its dealings
with the other riparians

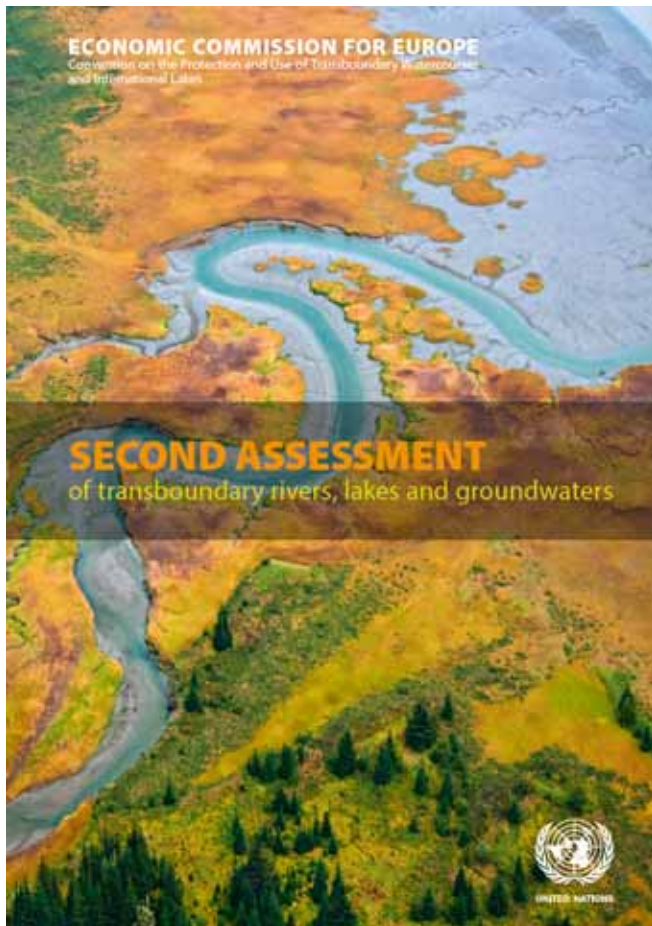


Responding to new challenges

- Adaptation to climate change in the transboundary context
- Transboundary dimension of the nexus?



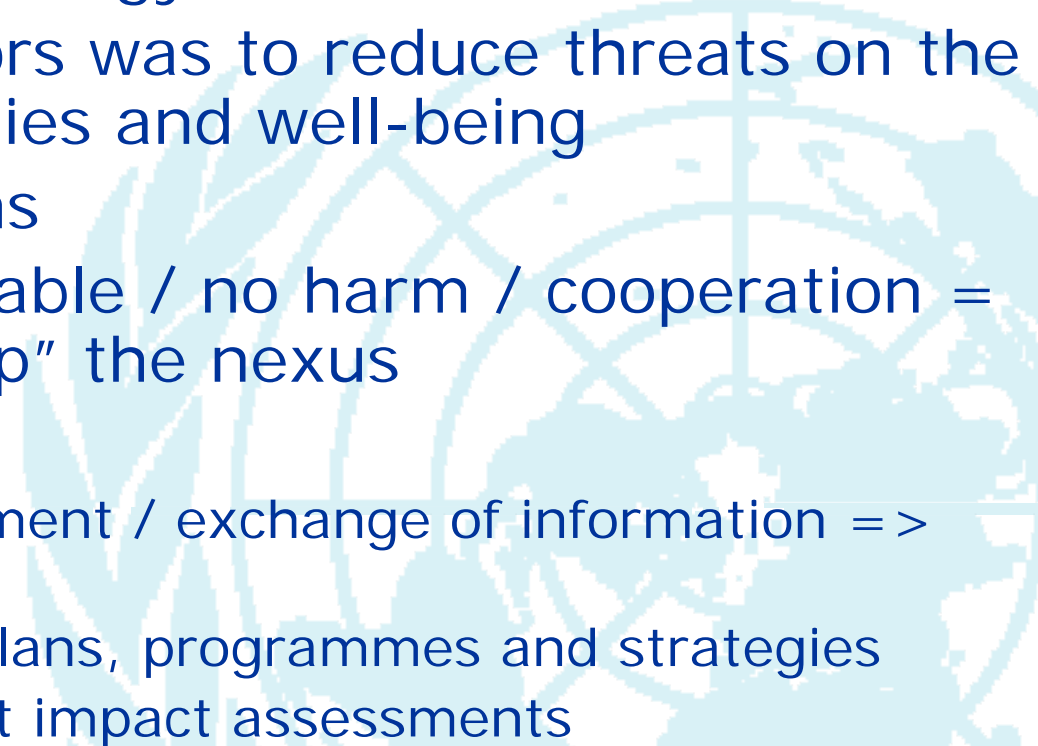
Assessing results



The Second Assessment

- 140 rivers, 25 lakes, 200 groundwaters and 25 Ramsar sites
 - More than 150 experts from 40 countries
 - Pressure factors, quantity and quality status, transboundary impacts, responses and future trends
- = > Highlights the water/food/energy nexus and climate change as challenges throughout the region

Is the Water Convention fit to address the nexus?

- Can't find "food" or "energy" in the text but...
 - Spirit of the negotiators was to reduce threats on the environment, economies and well-being
 - Sustainability concerns
 - Reasonable and equitable / no harm / cooperation = basic principles to "tap" the nexus
 - Different provisions:
 - Monitoring and assessment / exchange of information => beyond water
 - Development of joint plans, programmes and strategies
 - Obligations to carry out impact assessments
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How the Water Convention plans to tackle the nexus

- Assessment of the nexus application in a number of basins throughout the world

- Exchange of experience on joint bodies and build capacity

With the globalization of the Convention these activities have a global focus => Looking for interested partners

- Conflict prevention tool: establishment of an Implementation Committee

Thank you!

More information

including guidelines, publications and information on activities under the Convention can be found at

<http://unece.org/env/water>
water.convention@unece.org

