



Recommendation 1669 (2004)¹

Transboundary water basins in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly reasserts the Council of Europe's ongoing commitment to the protection and management of water resources and to compliance with the principles laid down in the European Charter on Water Resources.
2. It refers to its [Recommendation 1668 \(2004\)](#) on the management of water resources in Europe and to its [Recommendation 1480 \(2000\)](#) on the protection and management of the Danube basin.
3. It also draws attention to the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki, 1992) and the International Law Commission's Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (New York, 1997), and regrets that the latter has not yet entered into force.
4. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the adoption of the European Union Water Framework Directive in 2001 and calls on the European Union member states and acceding countries to implement it. This directive can also be used as a reference system for transboundary water management by non-European Union member states.
5. The Assembly supports the Initiative on the Sustainable Spatial Development of the Tisza/Tisa River Basin signed at the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning in Ljubljana (Slovenia) in September 2003.
6. The concept of the hydrographical basin as an instrument for water resource management has made its mark internationally over the past fifty years and the development potential of transboundary river basins and lakes has emerged as the cornerstone for international co-operation.
7. Transboundary water resource management helps promote dialogue among peoples and develop common interests between basin states. It therefore represents a means to achieve lasting stability and peace in Europe and to create solidarity between people. Basin management can also encourage good governance, sustainable development, a strengthening of decentralisation and the prevention and resolution of conflicts.
8. The Assembly points out that integrated management of transfrontier water resources should be carried out at the catchment basin level and that the territorial authorities should be given appropriate responsibilities in this field.
9. In this respect, the Assembly invites member states to develop transfrontier co-operation for the integrated management of transboundary rivers and lakes, in particular through bilateral and multilateral agreements for the introduction of harmonised policies, programmes and strategies to protect transboundary waters based on sound environmental, social and economic criteria. In particular they can promote and strengthen co-operation through the creation of Euro-regions.

1. Assembly debate on 25 June 2004 (24th Sitting) (see [Doc.10131](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Toshev). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 June 2004 (24th Sitting).



10. It invites member states to consider applying to the Interreg programmes (Strand A) financed by the European Regional Development Fund, for which all areas along the internal and external land borders of the European Union are eligible.
11. Moreover, the Assembly invites Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, which are states sharing transboundary water basins, to sign and/or ratify the Council of Europe Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities.
12. In particular, it calls on Albania, Greece, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Bulgaria to strengthen dialogue, particularly at parliamentary level, for the integrated management at regional level of transboundary rivers and lakes. It also calls on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to eliminate all obstacles which prevent a similar dialogue being set up and pursued within the Caucasus region.
13. The Assembly expresses its readiness to promote this parliamentary dialogue and to co-operate with the authorities of the countries concerned.
14. It calls on the governments of Albania, Greece and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, to draw up common plans of action and jointly take urgent measures to address the problems and threats to the Ohrid, Prespa and Dojran lakes and the Sevan lake respectively as well as to transboundary rivers in those regions.
15. In addition, the Assembly invites member states:
 - 15.1. to strengthen their national integrated water resources management systems and basin organisations, as stipulated in Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2001)14 on the European Charter on Water Resources;
 - 15.2. to step up legislative and administrative measures to give local and regional authorities all the necessary responsibilities for the management of water resources;
 - 15.3. to develop parliamentary co-operation to promote integrated transboundary water resource management.
16. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 16.1. draft a recommendation on the role and necessary powers of local and regional authorities with regard to the management of transboundary water resources;
 - 16.2. draft a model agreement on the management of transboundary lakes and river basins to be incorporated into the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities;
 - 16.3. envisage the organisation of a donor conference – under the auspices of the Council of Europe Development Bank – in order to raise the necessary funds for implementation of the above-mentioned common action plans for the preservation of transboundary water resources.
17. The Assembly further encourages the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to promote the role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities with regard to the management of water resources and, in particular, transboundary water basins.