



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Transboundary Water Cooperation: Mission (im)Possible?

Ambassador Aušra Semaškienė

The 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through
co-operation”

Belgrade, 11-13 May 2015



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*“The water problems of our world need not be only a
cause of tension; they can also be a catalyst for
cooperation...If we work together, a secure and
sustainable water future can be ours.”*

Kofi Annan, February 2002



Getting transboundary water resources management “right” is urgent because...



- Half of global available surface water is found in **263 international river basins**
- Groundwater resources cross under at least **273 international borders**

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Water *nexus* other sectors

Getting transboundary water resources management “right” is urgent because...

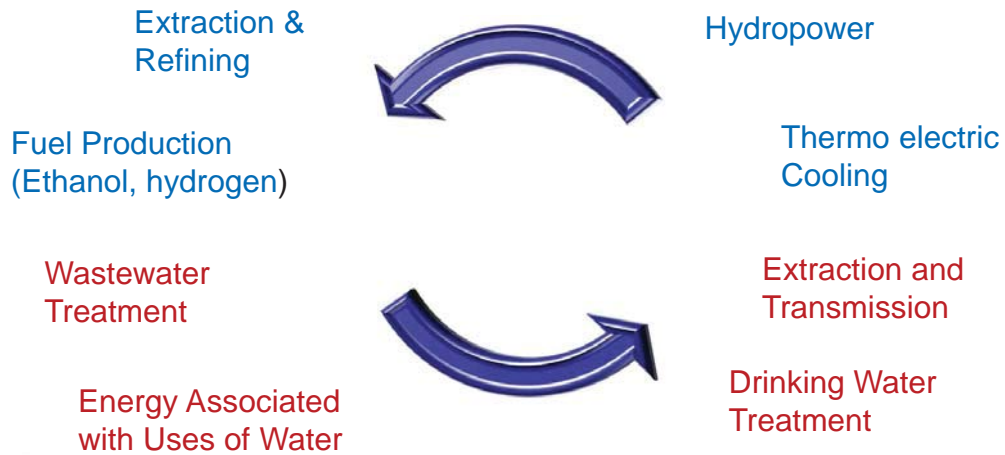
Water energises *all* sectors of society



Comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to the management of water sector is needed

Water and Energy Nexus

Water for Energy



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Energy for Water

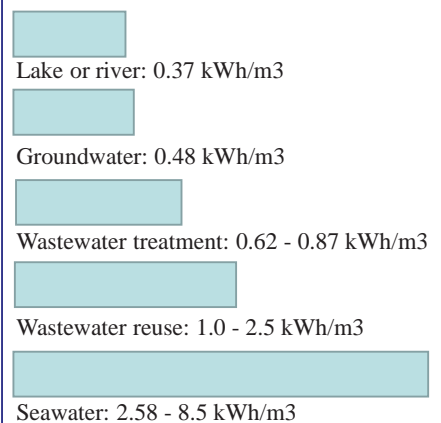
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Interrelationships between Water and Energy



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Energy required to deliver 1 m³ of clean water from...



Source: Amended diagram based on Scientific American, October 2008

Cooperation on Transboundary Waters is a Lengthy Journey

For each international basin the optimal mode of cooperation depends on a mix of factors including:

- hydrologic characteristics
- the economics of cooperative investments
- numbers and relationships of riparians
- costs of parties coming together

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Cooperation Tools



**Transboundary
Water
Cooperation**

International Conventions & Agreements

UNECE Convention on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes

Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessments

Shared experience
Joint learning
Round tables
Cooperative assessments

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Nemunas River Basin Management



Countries (% of total river basin):
 Lithuania 48
 Belarus 46
 Russia 3
 Poland 2,6
 Latvia 0,1

Area (km²) 98 200

First-class tributaries: Neris
 Shchara
 Šešupė
 Katra
 Merkys
 etc.

Legal Cooperation Framework



1. Agreements between Lithuania and Poland's Ministries of Environment
2. *Technical Protocol on Cooperation in the Protection and Use of the Water Resources in the Transboundary Neman River Basin between Lithuania and Belarus' Ministries of Environment* (in progress)
3. *Agreement between Lithuania, Belarus, Russia and the EU* (as a goal)
4. *Bilateral agreements with other countries*

Agreements between River Basin Countries Provide Legal Framework for the Protection of the River !

Let the Water Run... ?

Intensive water use goes on in the Nemunas River basin due to industry, household water consumption, agriculture and hydro-power engineering



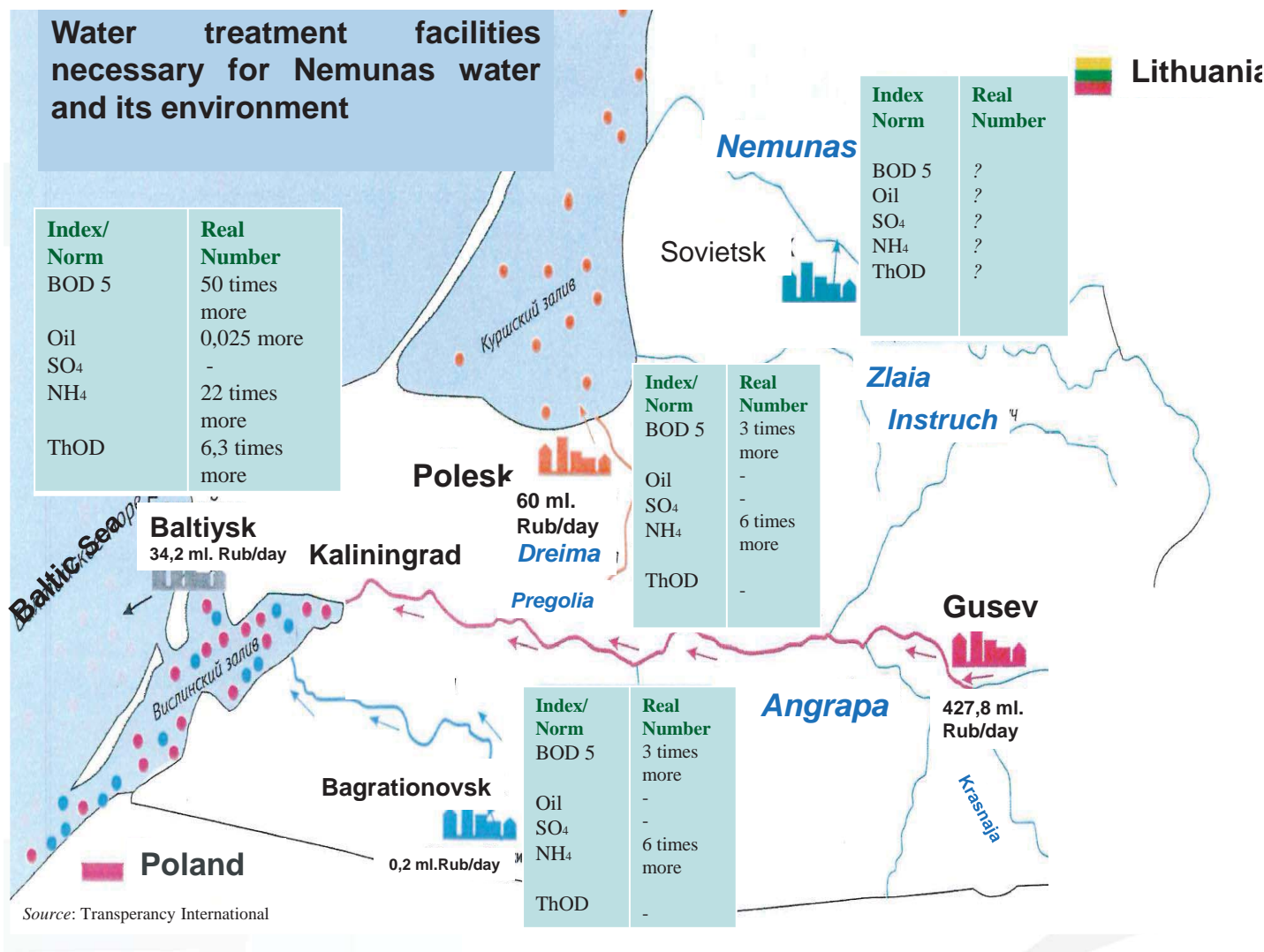
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Unsafe development and operation of nuclear, hydro and water treatment projects put at risk too much



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Water treatment facilities necessary for Nemunas water and its environment



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Safety Formula

Transboundary Water Cooperation + Effective Public Participation + Access to Information + Water Treatment



Thank You for Your Attention !

