

OSCE

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

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

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Addressing participants on behalf of ICPDR as well as on behalf of the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture, among other, in charge for water management in Croatia.

For a long time floods were not open threat to security but in last ten years this has radically changed, among other, due to climate changes. The fact that this issue is on the agenda of meeting under umbrella of Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, clearly shows that we all recognize flood risk as one of our main threat. By mutual help, through learning from experiences of the countries which were severe hit by floods and with joint efforts when it comes to development of forecasting systems we can prevail this threat and give our citizens security they need.

Both European and regional security from the adverse effects of water and protection mechanisms we have today has primarily been maintained through the building up of bilateral security agreements on water management cooperation. In addition to that, bilateral and multilateral frameworks of dialog are established with multilayered arrangements, and the best example of such international body dealing with all water management issues, and in particularly flood issues is ICPDR.

The necessity and benefits of promoting dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders is inevitable. Meeting like this is opportunity to bring together awareness and knowledge from professionals, actually, from practitioners. European basins are inseparable, sharing knowledge and experience in these fields is of vital importance in planning for the future.

Since July the 1st 2013 Croatia is the youngest, 28th member of European Union. By adopting the EU acquis, the Republic of Croatia has also adopted legislation, among other, Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks (Flood Directive).

At this moment, most of EU countries, including Croatia, go through the public consultation process for Draft of the 2nd River Basin Management Plan and 1st Flood Risk Management Plan, as part of 2nd RBMP. The Plan will be adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia by December 1st 2015.

Countries of Danube basin in the same time are also finalizing the 2nd Danube Basin Management Plan and 1st Danube Flood Risk Management Plan. In this regard, stakeholder workshop for the Plan will take place in Zagreb, on 2nd and 3rd July 2015.

Experience and help of other countries in water management, as it is well known, is especially valuable when it comes to flood prevention and flood management. In this respect, going back to catastrophic floods in May 2014, which took the most important- human lives- and caused severe material damage in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, shows that nature has its own scenario and sometimes it cannot be foreseen.

There are many opportunities for joined projects which can improve existing or develop new models for hydrological forecasting e.g. improvement of data exchange and early warning system and this is what we specially support and emphasize in ICPDR but also in bilateral meetings.

According to agenda, meeting will end up with clear and practical conclusions; water related issues have always been on OSCE agenda and international community needs such facilitators who bring experts, organizations, politicians and other community members together towards a common goal.