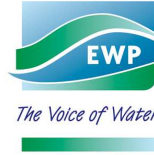




United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe



Ministry of Transport, Public
Works and Water Management
of the Netherlands



European Water Partnership



Cooperative Programme on
Water and Climate

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND WATER – THE NEED FOR STRONGER COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Brussels, 12 and 13 March 2009

Draft Report

Introduction

The European Policy Summit on Water in Brussels on November 5th 2008 issued a clear call for a stronger and more focused cooperation on Climate Change Adaptation and Water in Europe. The EWP, the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, UNECE and CPWC have taken up this call and organised the Conference “Climate Change Adaptation and Water – the need for a stronger Cooperation in Europe” (12,13 March, Brussels) as a first step in setting up this cooperation.

The Conference proved to be a very successful event, with a large number of participants from all sectors and regions of Europe. Around 185 individuals from 25 European countries from the European Union and from the UNECE region registered and discussed the need for focused cooperation on Climate Change Adaptation from different perspectives.

This document summarises the outcomes of the Conference and will provide a basis for the future steps to set up a *European Dialogue on Climate Change Adaptation and Water (CCAW)*. Annex 1 provides a detailed overview of the results of the breakout sessions.

At this point we would like to thank the participants for their valuable input, the speakers for their very interesting presentations and the Representation of Baden-Wurttemberg for hosting the event.

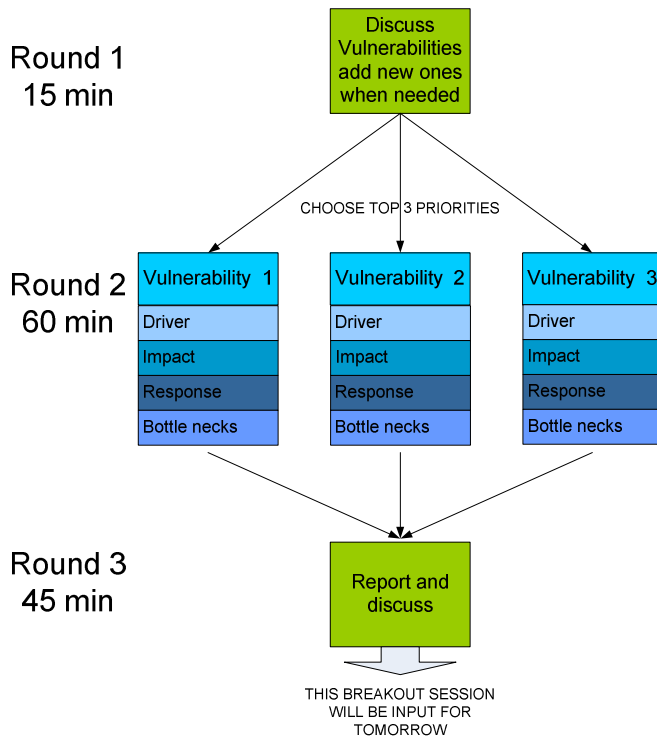
Programme Conference

The Conference had two clear objectives: firstly to discuss the need for and set up of an increased cooperation on CCAW both among the countries of the European Union guided by the White Paper and the countries in the UNECE Region guided by the UNECE Guidance Document on Water and Climate, and secondly to bring a clear European message to the fifth World Water Forum in Istanbul. To be able to do this, and to make sure the input of all participants would be included in the debate, the Conference was divided into four plenary sessions and seven breakout sessions. The full programme is attached to this document (annex 3).

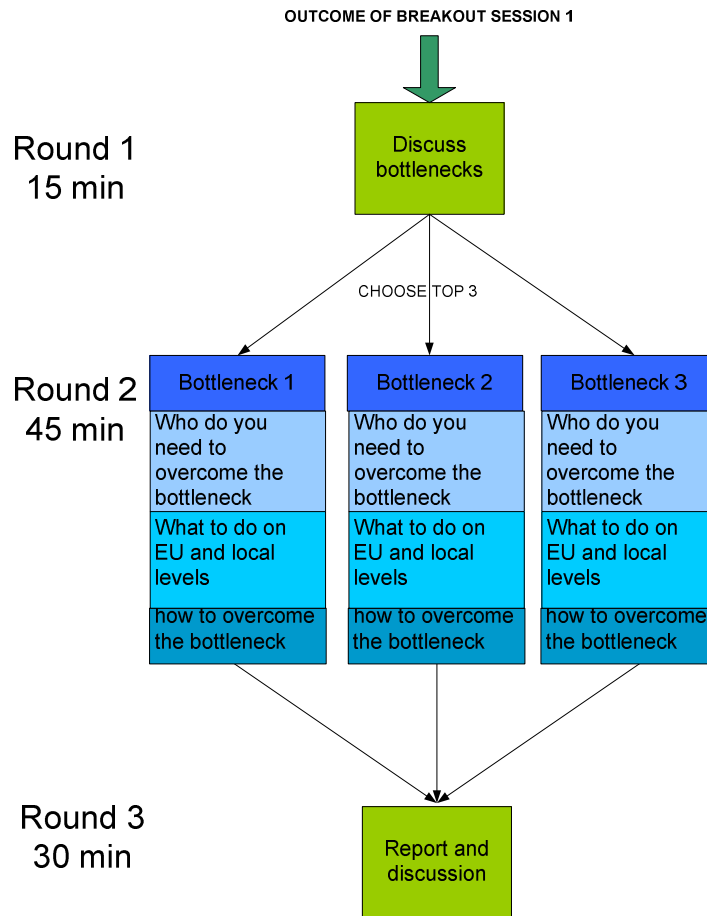
The first three plenary sessions aimed at informing the audience on the different initiatives already undertaken at international, national and sectoral level. Presentations were given by the EU DG Environment, UNECE, Spain, The Netherlands, Georgia, Belarus and Hungary and by the

European Investment Bank, the State of Baden-Wurttemberg (Germany), Fugro Water Services, ICLEI, OFWAT, EnBW and WWF, providing numerous perspectives as well as detailed information on current initiatives. The various presentations and perspectives in itself already showed the potential benefits of cooperation, by making clear awareness of each others activities is missing. Moreover, the chairman of the Dutch Delta Committee, Prof. Veerman, handed the first copy of the English version of the final report of the Committee to Mr. Gammeltoft of the European Commission. All the presentations are available for download at www.ewp.eu.

In the first breakout session “**Vulnerabilities, actions and bottlenecks per European region**”, five regional groups discussed the vulnerabilities that their region faced, which actions were needed, and which bottlenecks are faced in addressing these vulnerabilities. The discussion then focused on how these bottlenecks could be addressed on the European level, thereby providing input into the potential activities of a European Dialogue. The setup of the first breakout session is visualised below.



The second breakout session “**Addressing bottlenecks by strengthening cooperation**” discussed how the bottlenecks identified in the first session can be addressed by strengthening cooperation in a number of enabling mechanisms: Finance, Governance and Management, Private Sector and Research. Within these groups, per bottleneck the discussion focused on which actors were needed around the table to address the bottleneck, which actions should be taken, and how these actions should connect to a European level. At the conference, due to the relative size of the two groups, “Private Sector” and “Finance” were merged together. The setup of the second breakout session is visualised below.



The concluding session discussed the outcomes of the breakout sessions and agreed on a conference statement to be presented in Istanbul at the World Water Forum. This statement is attached as annex 2.

Outcomes

The discussions during the Conference and especially in the breakout sessions resulted in very rich and detailed outcomes. Below the outcomes are summarised under the four main headings derived from the setup of the breakout sessions: 'Regional vulnerabilities', 'bottlenecks', 'actions to address the bottlenecks' and 'actions on European level'. Summarising inevitably causes the loss of some detail of the discussions and therefore the detailed notes of the breakout sessions are listed in annex 1.

The following vulnerabilities were discussed in detail in the groups:

- River flooding
- Glacier melting and mountain erosion
- Water scarcity
- Water quality
- Existing spatial planning
- Sea level rise
- River flooding and urban flooding
- Glacier melting

The discussions on these vulnerabilities generated a large number of bottlenecks. From this large list a number of priority bottlenecks were identified and summarised under the following headings:

- Lack of an integrated approach. No coordination and knowledge exchange between sectors. Specifically the lack of and difficulty in communication between research and other sectors.
- Lack of awareness of the challenges. Lack of reliable and easily accessible data.
- Lack of financial means and understanding of the economic significance of the challenges.
- Uncertainty is difficult to manage, there is no certainty of occurrence.
- Lack of incentives to increase efficiency.
- Challenges are transboundary, but the management of the challenges is still largely national.

For each of the bottlenecks a large number of actions were identified. A number of overall conclusions can be identified from the actions listed:

- Cooperation should be improved between countries, sectors and stakeholders, exchanging best practices. Local stakeholders have to be involved. Basin level provides a good level for cooperation.
- Awareness of the challenges is crucial and has to be promoted.
- Communication between research sector and other sectors should be improved. Research has to be policy relevant, demand driven and better aggregated towards policy makers. Data should be considered a public good and be easily available. Knowledge exchange platforms should be created.
- Financial implications of climate change measures have to be made clear. Climate change should be incorporated in existing funding.
- Long term planning and scenario-thinking should be promoted and strategies prepared – in cooperation with other stakeholders.
- Public Private Partnerships have to be promoted in an open, transparent and market-oriented way.

Actions that were identified on the European level were:

- Best practices and exchange of information should be promoted on a European level. Private and public domain should be better linked.
- Implementation of the WFD should be better enforced, by setting up River Basin Management Plans.
- Effective regulations should be set up, focusing on a local level
- More investment in capacity building.
- Application for and regulation of international research programmes should be simplified

Conclusion and way forward

The presentations and discussions during the conference clearly showed the rationale for setting up a stronger cooperation in Europe. Within Europe many initiatives and projects are already undertaken but cooperation and coordination is mostly lacking which causes a large potential not being used. The conference clearly showed that actors from different regions and different sectors don't know what activities other parties already do, activities from which they could learn a lot. Furthermore, the conference showed that awareness is still lacking on the main challenges.

On the basis of the outcomes, the EWP and its partners will continue to work on setting up a European Dialogue on Climate Change Adaptation and Water. The Dialogue will focus on raising

awareness, exchanging experiences and best practices between all stakeholders and the set up of concrete projects to help make sure Europe is safe of climate change. It will be a focal point for coordination in Europe, as well as towards the outside world.

The UNECE will finalise its Guidance document on Water and Climate later this year, and used the Brussels meeting to inform the countries of the European Union and the European Commission about the guidance. During the conference the countries of both the EU and the UNECE region expressed their appreciation for the Guidance and its application at local level. Both these groups expressed interest in setting up concrete projects for the implementation of the Guidance.

The conference statement was presented in the WWF-5 by Mr. Fritz Holzwarth during the Dialogue on Water and Climate among the regions of the world. This session clearly showed adaptation is taken up by all the regions of the world.

Detailed plans on how to set up the Dialogue, its objectives and set up will be shared with you over the coming weeks.

Annexes

- 1) Detailed outcomes breakout sessions
- 2) Conference statement
- 3) Programme
- 4) Participants list

Contact

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