Co-operation in the Tisza River Basin

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Dongying, 16-19 October 2007
3. International Yellow River Forum

Central Bureau of Water and Environment in Hungary
Tisza River Basin

Longitude: 962 km
Catchment area: 157,186 km²
“Like a mad who throw away his chains
Run the river across the plains
Crying, moaning broke its way through the dyke
And wanted to gulp the world wide.”

Sándor Petőfi
The start of international co-operation after the World War I

- Commission de Regime des Eaux du Danube (CRED)
  - the Hungarian-Romanian Water Regime Agreement (1924)
  - the Hungarian-Czechoslovakian Water Regime Agreement (1928)
- Transcarpathian Region (Czechoslovak-Hungarian-Romanian) Commission
3. International Yellow River Forum

Bilateral frontier water agreements after the World War II

- Hungary-Sovietunion
- Hungary-Romania
- Hungary-Czechoslovakia
- Hungary-Yugoslavia
- Romania-Yugoslavia
- Romania-Sovietunion
- Czechoslovakia-Sovietunion
The structure of the frontier water commissions

• By catchment principle:
  – Tisza Subcommission

• By technical or administrative principle:
  – Water Management Subcommission
  – Hidrometeorological Subcommission
  – Financing Subcommission
Important tasks of water commissions

- water level and volume measurements
- checking the state of the dykes and the hydrotechnical constructions
- flood protection
- agreement of development and technical plans
- water balance
- water quality measurements and evaluation
The start of multilateral co-operation

- COMECON Tisza Group (9 topics)
- Convention on measures to combat pollution of the Tisza river and its tributaries (1986, Szeged)
Changes in the international co-operation after 1990

• New agreements with reference to Helsinki Convention
  – Slovakia and Ukraine (1994)
  – Hungary and Ukraine (1993 and 1997)
  – Romania and Ukraine (1997)
New challenges

- Pollution, Floods, Deforestation, Loss of biodiversity
  - Cyanid and heavy metal pollutions in 2000
  - Environmental Protection Programme (2001)
  - Heavy floods on the river Tisza 1998-2000
  - Budapest Declaration (2001)
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Tisza Water Forum

- WG I. National characteristics of the Tisza River Basin (Yugoslavia)
- WG II. Description of the flood control situation by countries (Romania)
- WG III. Increase of lead time available for preparation (Hungary)
- WG IV. Definition of the design flood levels (Slovakia)
- WG V. Implementation of the necessary measures (Ukraine)
- WG VI. Environmental impact assessment (Slovakia)
- WG VII. International co-operation, legal framework (Hungary)
- WG VIII. Integrating the outputs (Romania)

Tisza River Basin Flood Control Concept (2002)
The role of international organisations

• ICPDR Focus on Danube level matters
• UNDP, UNEP, WWF, Wetland International, GEF
• Projects related to Tisza basin
• Tisza River Basin Integrated Sustainable Development Programme
Ministerial MoU
Vienna, 13-14 December 2004

- Towards a RBMP for the Tisza River supporting sustainable development of the region
- Formulation of Ad hoc Tisza Group
- Harmonisation with the UNDP/GEF Tisza projects and the Tisza Water Forum
The Water Framework Directive as a driving force

- Discussions with the neighbouring countries on WFD implementation
- Hernád/Hornad Project (HU-SK-NE)
- Körösök/Crisuri Project (HU-RO-FR)
- Hungarian-French WFD Workshop (Debrecen, 2005)
Latest developments in the bilateral co-operation

- Draft of Hungarian-Slovakian Frontier Water Agreement
- Hungarian-Slovakian Committee of Common Water Basins and Frontier Waters
- Referencies relating to multilateral conventions
- Bilateral enforcement of multilateral goals
Summary

• After WW I: Bilateralism relying on CRED
• After WW II till 1994: Stronger bilateralism
• Sofia Convention: Possibility of multilateralism
• Important role of international organisations
• 2004 Tisza MoU: Stronger multilateralism
Thank you for your kind attention!