



# Public Participation in transboundary water cooperation

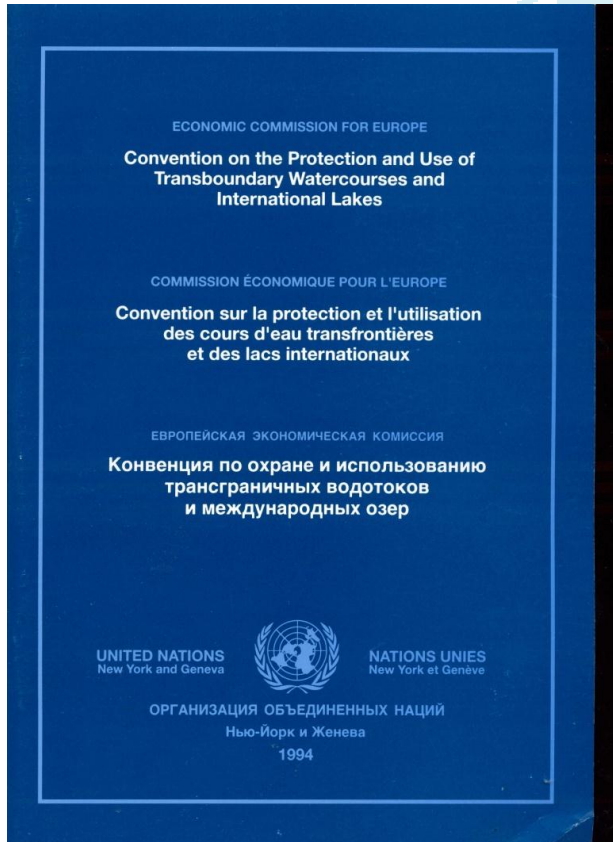
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Ohrid 4 November 2010



# Five regional environmental ECE conventions

- The protection of transboundary waters
- Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents
- Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Long-range Transport of Air Pollution
- Public information and participation in decision making (Aarhus)

# The Water Convention



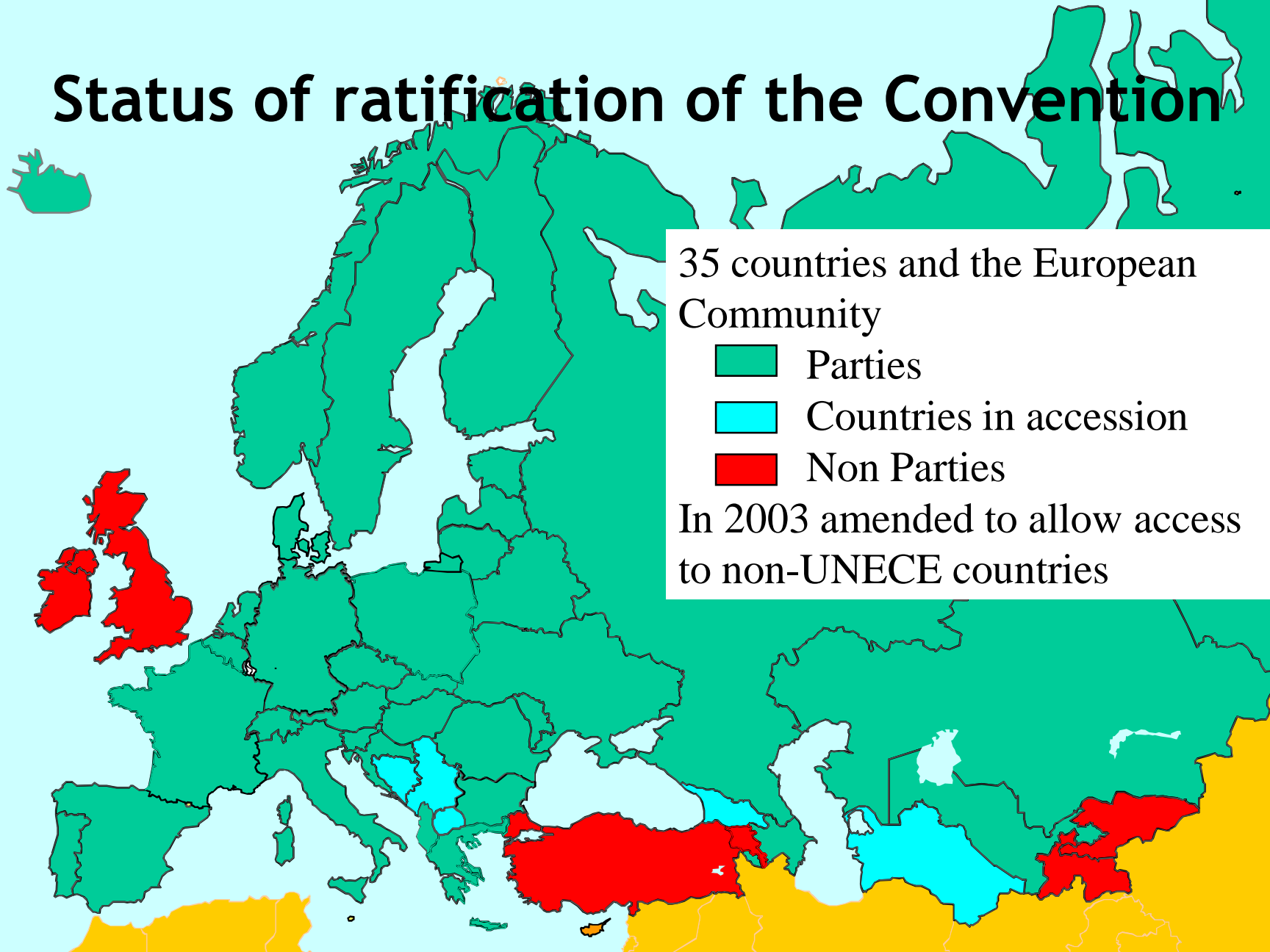
- Signed on 17 March 1992
- Entered into force on 6 October 1996
- Protocol on Water and Health adopted in 1999, entered into force in 2005
- Protocol on Civil Liability adopted in 2003

# Status of ratification of the Convention

35 countries and the European Community

- Parties
- Countries in accession
- Non Parties

In 2003 amended to allow access to non-UNECE countries



# Main obligations under the Convention



- Protection of transboundary waters by preventing, controlling and reducing transboundary impacts
  - Reasonable and equitable use of transboundary waters
  - Obligation to cooperate through agreements and joint institutions
- => Overall objective of sustainability**

# Guidance on Public Participation (2000)

- Participation of NGOs as observers on the basis of reasonable and clear criteria
- Procedures for oversight (transparency) and a role for the public in monitoring of implementation with regard to obligations
- PP in the development of plans etc for catchment areas and in the preparation of agreements
- JB should receive and consider information from the public
- JB should have a PP strategy and focal point

# Aarhus Convention

Almaty Guidelines on Promoting  
the Application of the Principles  
of the Aarhus Convention in  
International Forums (2005):

*Access to docs, written statements,  
oral comments of the “public  
concerned”*

# Examples of mechanisms

- Rules for observer status developed in Commissions on the Oder, Scheldt, Meeuse/Maas, Danube, Rhine, Sava
- Working groups for cooperation with NGOs: Russian-Estonian Commission
- River-citizen forums, stakeholder conferences: Okavango, US-Mexico, Danube, Peipsi Lake
- Websites, media events, publications: Central Asia, Mosel and Saar, Romania



# Thank you!

## More information

including guidelines, publications and information on activities under the Convention can be found at

<http://unece.org/env/water>  
[water.convention@unece.org](mailto:water.convention@unece.org)