

Recommendations

**of the meeting of representatives of National Committees – members of IHP UNESCO's
Group II – Central and Eastern Europe
16 September 2015, Moscow**

Elaboration of a strategy of activities and forms of cooperation of IHP UNESCO's National Committees to implement Theme 1, IHP-VIII

**“Water Related Disasters and Hydrological Changes in Central and Eastern
Europe”**

50 years ago the International Hydrological Decade was launched, which then evolved into UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme. These 50 years of successful cooperation in hydrological studies not only extremely increased our knowledge on hydrology, but also put in place the mechanisms of cooperation contributing to the resolution of water related issues, culminating in many scientific disciplines conducting water research. Many international associations and activities concerning water were developed largely due to their participation in IHP UNESCO. During the 4th Russian meeting of hydrologists entitled “Fundamental problems related to water and water resources”, the IHP Committee of the Russian Federation invited the representatives of Electoral Group II to attend the formal celebration of the 50th Anniversary.

Over the last 15–20 years, the common strategy of Group II countries in the fields of hydrology and water resources has been mostly based on the development specificities of these countries under the circumstances of radical changes occurring in their social and economic areas. For most countries, these changes have had common negative effects, such as reduction of hydrological networks and their technical backwardness, decreased quality of observations, sharp reduction in budgets of scientific and technical institutions, the reduction in the extent of scientific research and funding of international cooperation, and practical cancellation of experimental research and of free data, information and publication exchange. Consequently, this limited the possibilities of Commonwealth of Independent States to actively take part in international cooperation, particularly in WMO and UNESCO.

The common problems necessitate the exchange of experience in problem solving faced by scientists and experts in hydrology, production of measures for mobilisation of resources, and common efforts to strengthen international cooperation activities, particularly concerning the projects with the highest level of scientific and practical interests.

The meeting of National Committees' representatives of IHP UNESCO's Group II (hereinafter: meeting) was convened in order to coordinate the activities of National Committees regarding IHP-VIII, improve international cooperation in the fields of hydrology and water

resources, promote discussions regarding the tasks of IHP-VIII (2014–2021), and produce plans of common activities in the interest of the individual countries.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of IHP's National Committees of Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Russian Federation, and by collaborators and members of scientific and project institutes, and higher education institutions.

At the meeting, a broad range of relevant problems was addressed, as well as the tasks concerning hydrology and water resources, by taking into account the specificities and interests of the individual countries. During the meeting, various issues concerning the on-going activities and future plans were discussed. The option of mobilising the countries' own funds and funds received elsewhere, including administration resources, coordination of activities, production of a single strategy and a concrete programme of effective cooperation were considered.

As a result of the discussions and exchange of views regarding the reports and communications of the responsible National Committee representatives, which were on the meeting's agenda, the following recommendations were adopted:

1. Considered as the most relevant and priority directions by National Committees under the IHP-VIII "*Water security: Responses to Local, Regional, and Global Challenges*" (2014–2021), we need to address the resolution of problems and tasks of contemporary global and regional hydrology, under Theme 1 of IHP-VIII: "Water Related Disasters and Hydrological Changes in Central and Eastern Europe".
2. We need to focus on solving these tasks, also based on the selected experimental river basins.
3. The significance of interregional cooperation of Group II countries based on a basin-wide approach is stressed. The cooperation of all countries (not only in this group) is important, as river basins connect many countries in both Europe and Asia, etc.
4. We should continue to provide the pathways and opportunities for setting up regional Category II UNESCO Centres for Russian speaking hydrologists and experts in water management.
5. We must stress the need for education in the fields of hydrology and water resources.
6. In the near future, a coordination meeting regarding the relevant issues of mutual cooperation should be held; furthermore, preparations for the 22nd session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council (2016) should be made to discuss the candidacy for the President of the Intergovernmental Council.