

3 September 2002

**Launch of the European Union -
States of Eastern Europe, Caucasus,
and Central Asia
Strategic Partnership on Water
for Sustainable Development**

Johannesburg Declaration

**World Summit on Sustainable Development
Johannesburg, South Africa**

We, the European Union (EU) and the Ministers of the States of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA),

Reaffirming our commitment to,

- the conclusions of the Almaty EECCA Ministerial Conference on Water (October 2000),**
- the related objectives and commitments made in the framework of the "Environment for Europe" process,**
- the recent commitments made by EECCA Environmental Ministers on the development of a joint Environmental Strategy (The Hague, April 2002) with water as one of the main priorities,**
- the call by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) regional ministerial meeting to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to develop specific initiatives in areas such as fresh water, sanitation, oceans and seas, and coastal zones,**
- the Bonn Recommendations for Action and the Bonn Ministerial Declaration of the International Conference on Freshwater,**
- the Resolutions of the Council of the European Union on the EU Water and Energy Initiatives,**
- the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving by 2015 the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water,**

and

- **expecting that EECCA Environment Ministers will develop a joint and comprehensive Environmental Strategy to be adopted by the Kyiv Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in May 2003,**
- **confident that the EECCA Environmental Strategy will contain an analysis of environmental and sustainable development problems in relation to the water sector and will provide concrete guidelines and action programs,**
- **with regard to the UN International Freshwater Year 2003,**
- **acknowledging that a new East-West European Environmental Partnership and a Central Asian Initiative on Sustainable Development are being launched at the WSSD,**
- **acting on the basis of the Plan of Implementation agreed during the WSSD,**

and

- **recognising that water resources, good-quality water-related ecosystems, water supply and sanitation are vital for security, health and well-being and can make a significant contribution to sustainable development, poverty reduction and economic growth,**
- **stressing that improving water policy means progress on all three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental,**

- **emphasising that good water governance includes measures to build capacity, participatory approaches in water management and effective provisions for transparent decision-making. This is vital if the private sector, civil society and other actors are to play a valid and important role in the provision of water services,**
- **accentuating the importance of improved international collaboration in the management of transboundary water courses,**
- **highlighting that joint benefits from shared water resources promote economic development and act as a catalyst for peace and security,**
- **stressing that financial and human resources need to be increased to solve the water crisis;**

Are firmly committed to contributing:

- **to halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water (as outlined in the Millennium Declaration) and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation,**
- **to implementing the water and sanitation-related parts of the Plan of Implementation agreed at the WSSD,**
- **to developing integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans in all countries by 2005, including, where applicable, co-ordination in transboundary water courses,**

- **to ensuring that the action programmes to achieve these targets balance human water needs with those of the environment thereby contributing to reversing the current trend in natural resource degradation as soon as possible and to the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the loss of biological diversity;**

and have reached agreement on launching a new strategic partnership on water and sanitation to:

- **make a key contribution to the Plan of Implementation agreed at the WSSD,**
- **create a joint platform for improved co-ordination and communication on water-related development assistance in order to increase transparency, streamline existing and future development activities and ensure more effective official development assistance,**
- **ensure that water, sanitation and water resources management are given the appropriate priority in environmental strategies and sustainable development programmes,**
- **assist in the application of integrated river basin management approaches in transboundary water courses and support the establishment and strengthening of river basin organisations and of appropriate regional legal frameworks,**
- **increase the transfer of knowledge and know-how and improve the knowledge base through institutional capacity building and targeted research programmes building on existing mechanisms and organisations,**

- **encourage the development of innovative financing mechanisms, of financially sustainable strategies, including water pricing policies that are sensitive to the poor, and of a set of principles on user and private sector finance to maximise public funds, minimise risk, and attract private sector involvement and investment,**
- **design the concrete components of the strategic partnership and the action programmes by the time of the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto in March 2003 and the "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Kyiv in May 2003.**

On the basis of this new partnership, and recalling its commitments made in Monterrey, the EU is ready to increase and deliver resources over the following years, in response to countries prioritising water and sanitation in national sustainable development strategies and poverty reduction strategies where they exist.