

GWP CEE Release

GWP Central and Eastern Europe develops response to droughts

29 May 2012 (Bratislava) – In an effort to address challenges of climate change and water scarcity, GWP Central and Eastern Europe launches “Integrated Drought Management Programme Inception Report” today.

Prof. Janusz Kindler coordinated Task Force team comprising Prof. Janos Tamas (Hungary), Prof. Gintautas Stankunavicius (Lithuania), Prof. Elena Mateescu (Romania) and Prof. Pavol Bielek (Slovakia) as well as several experts representing GWP Country Water Partnerships. The report was developed in frame of Integrated Drought Management Task Force in the beginning of 2012 as a result of an intensive several months long consultation process in Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

The authors are analyzing in three main parts drought situation and the related risks in the selected countries of the region, mapping current national policies regarding drought monitoring and management and proposing new national and regional initiatives for the WMO/GWP Integrated Drought Management Programme. The last part is presenting several policy oriented proposals towards specific elements of integrated drought management systems. They include improvement of risk monitoring and risk assessment components, improvement and integration of various data sets and development of new comprehensive drought indicators.

It has been widely acknowledged that reduced precipitation, as a key phenomena leading to drought, is a recurrent feature of European climate. According to the European Environment Agency, droughts can occur in Europe in both high and low rainfall areas and in any season. Although Mediterranean countries are particularly affected by water scarcity and prone to drought episodes due to their geographic and climatic characteristics, the consequences of drought also cause damages in other countries.

“In the last decades severe and prolonged droughts have clearly shown vulnerability of South and Central Europe to this natural hazard”, says Prof. Kindler. Socio-economic problems accompanying water shortage and the need for drought mitigation measures have recently drawn attention of the public and governments.

Based upon the research conducted by the experts, a substantial package of existing approaches and proposed measures has been suggested that is readily available to policy makers. There are also many proposals of case studies to illustrate application of drought management practices.

However, integrated drought management policy is still under the preparation. Therefore, proposed policy oriented proposals will require a broad consensus among stakeholders. Expert dialogue should allow participation of stakeholders from key sectors: agriculture, water management and meteorological services. As a neutral platform, GWP Central and Eastern Europe is ready to facilitate this discussion and link up European Union policies with practical steps on the national level.

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Note to editors

Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) vision is for a water secure world. Its mission is to support the sustainable development and management of water resources at all levels. GWP was created to foster the implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM): the coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources by maximising economic and social welfare without compromising the sustainability of ecosystems and the environment. GWP CEE's international network comprises 12 Country Water Partnerships in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine and 141 Partners located in 15 countries. Learn more at gwpcee.org

Integrated Drought Management

This approach moves drought management practices from reactive, representing the crisis management to more proactive drought management based on risk management principles. It provides coordination for efforts towards integration of science, policy and implementation by strengthening drought monitoring, drought risk assessment, development of drought prediction; drought early warning services and sharing best practices at the local, national and regional levels. It advocates and facilitates integration of responses by various agencies from various sectors such as water, land, agriculture, ecosystems, and energy on one hand and drought affected sectors on the other.

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