



**EUROPE-INBO 2023**

**16-19 October 2023**



WATER  
CONVENTION



**UNECE**

# **Transboundary water cooperation challenges in Europe and beyond – the role of the Water Convention**

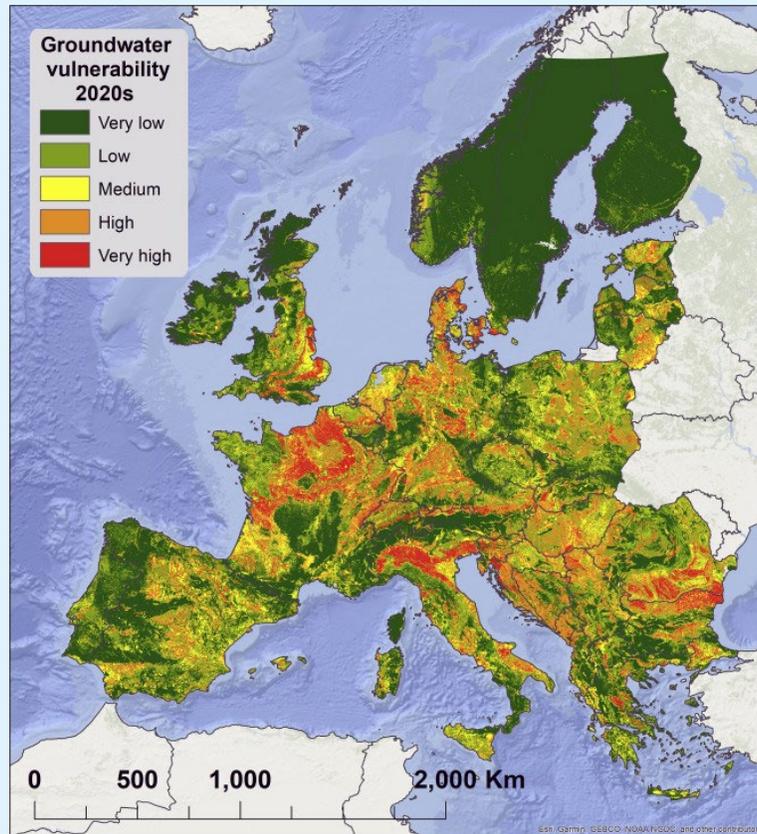
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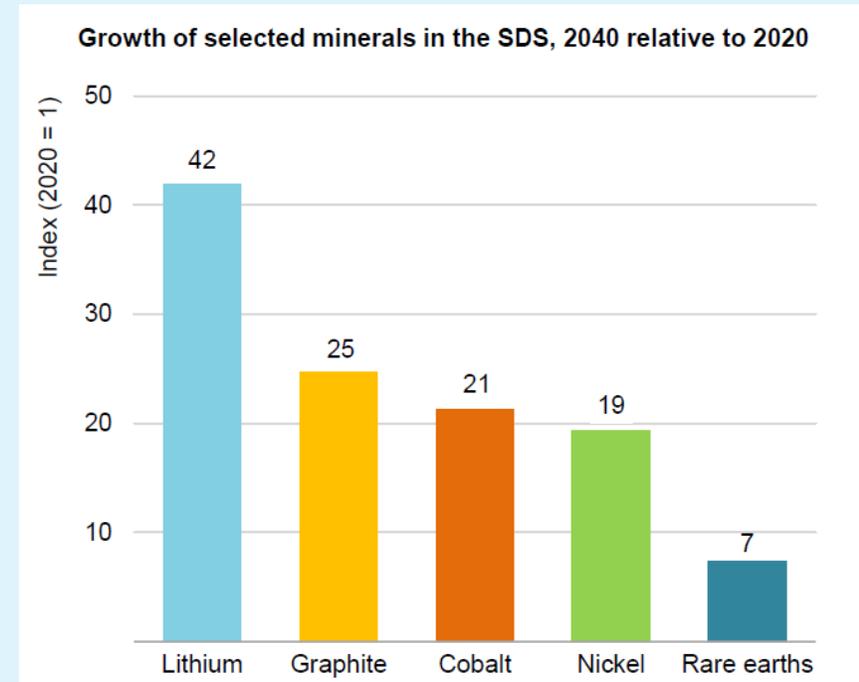
# Groundwater vulnerability to pollution and climate impacts



While cooperation on transboundary groundwaters lags behind

# Current and future pollution threats including those driven by decarbonization efforts

**Plastic pollution:** It is estimated that 82 million tons/year of plastic waste is mismanaged, of which 13 million tons/year end up in the terrestrial environment and 5.8 million tons/year end up in rivers



**Mining** The rapid deployment of clean energy technologies as part of energy transitions implies a significant increase in demand for minerals

**Policies for the security of supply chains** aim to increase mining (production and recycling) in Europe

# Climate change impacts: Economic losses due to extreme weather events



Heat waves, floods and storms etc. have caused **over €145 billion in economic losses** in the EU over the past decade



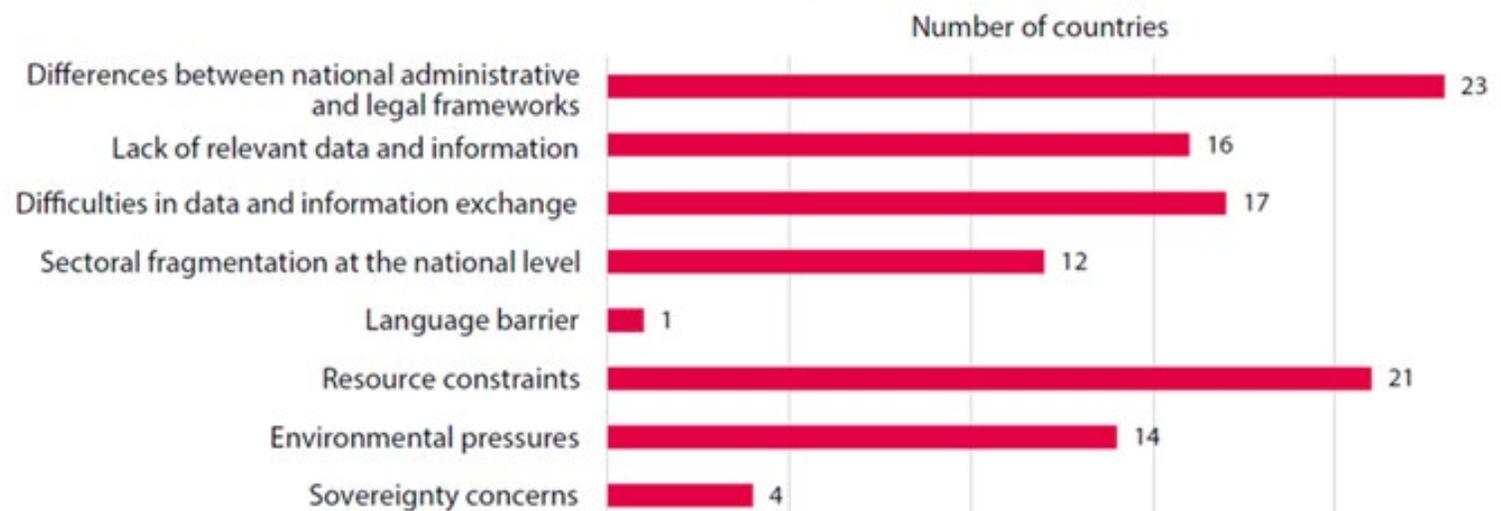
# Resource constraints impede transboundary water cooperation

## Key findings – main challenges



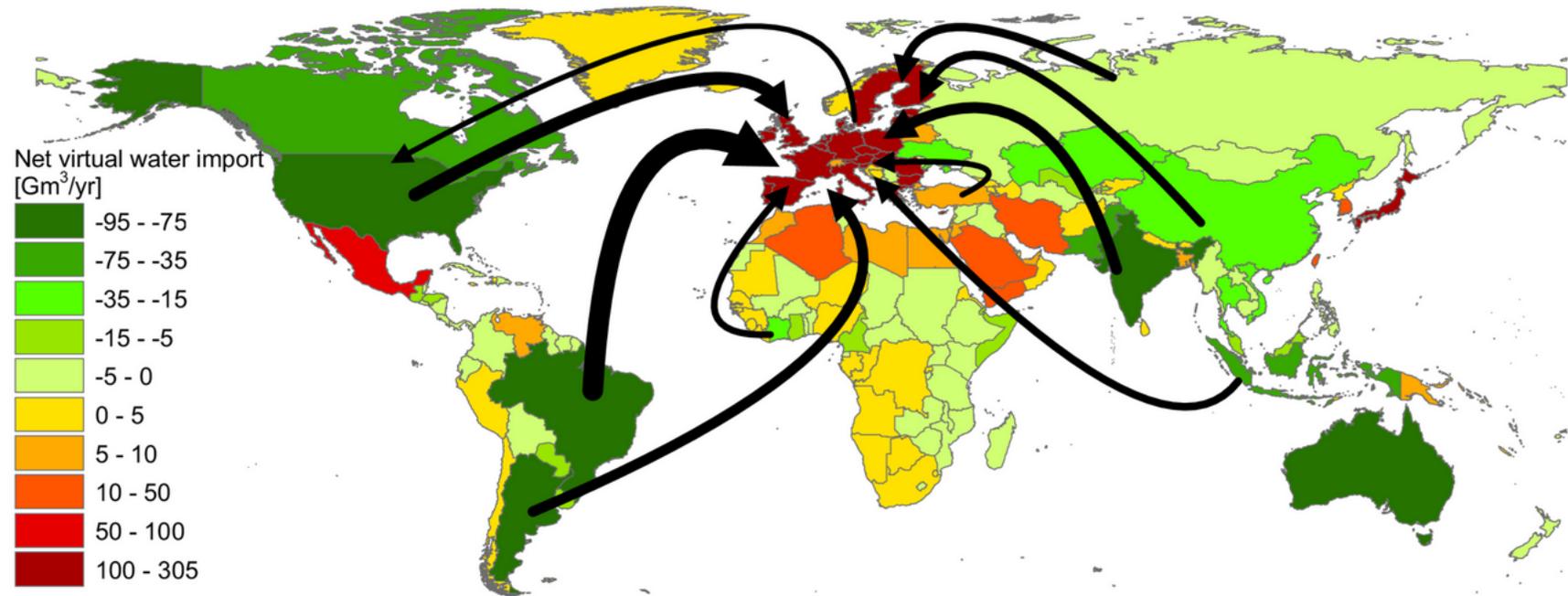
50% of the Parties report resource constraints among main challenges for cooperation on transboundary waters

Improve financing of transboundary water cooperation



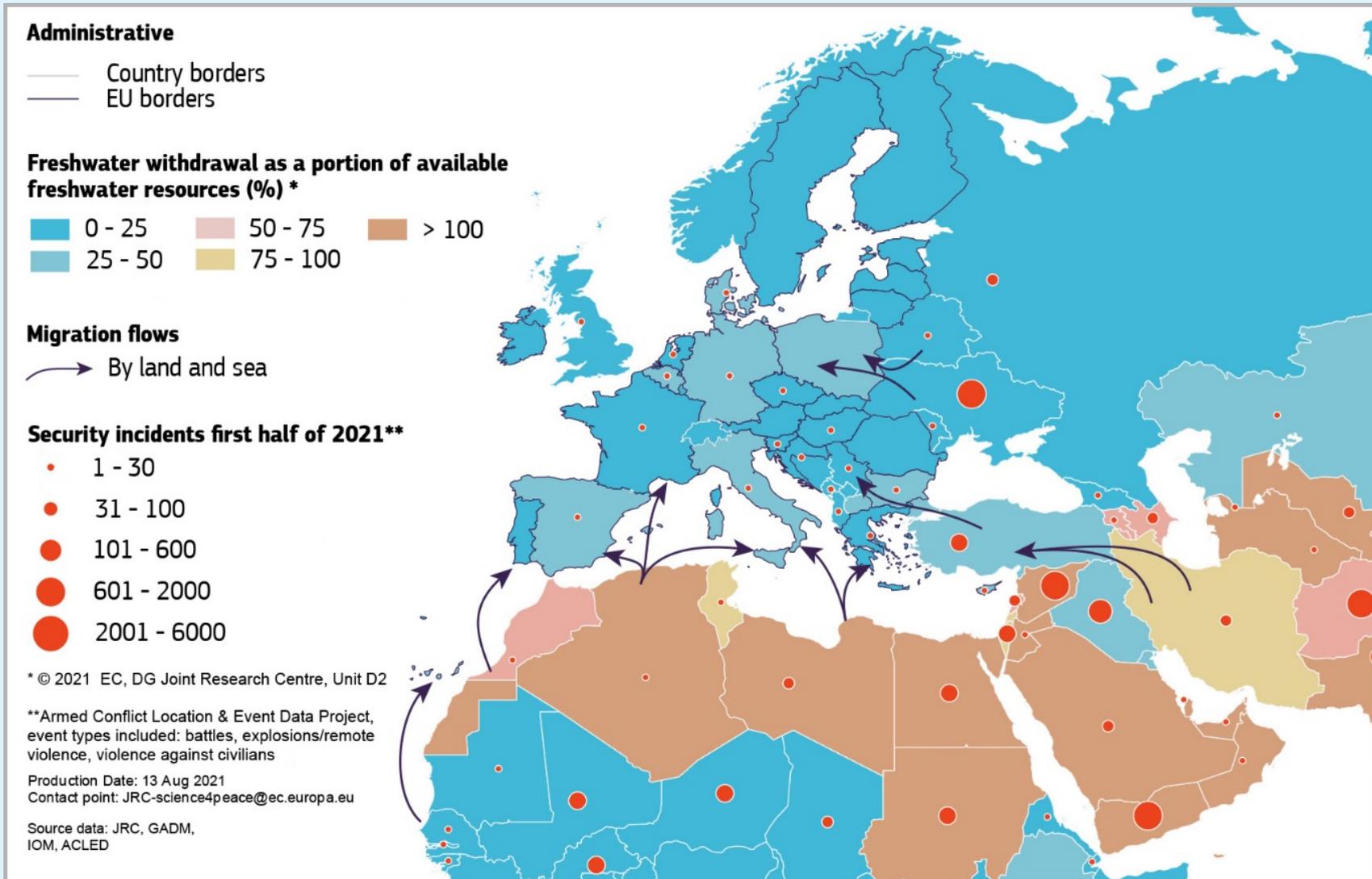
# Europe's food safety depends on water management outside its borders

- In Europe as a whole, **40% of the water footprint lies outside of its borders** (Water Footprint Network, 2011).
- **Over 40% of the EU's agricultural imports could become highly vulnerable to drought by 2050**, inducing competition for water and fertile land (European Commission, 2021).



Legend: Virtual water imports into Europe. Source: Mekonnen, M.M. and Hoekstra, A.Y. (2011) National water footprint accounts: the green, blue and grey water footprint of production and consumption, [Value of Water Research Report Series No.50, UNESCO-IHE, Delft, Netherlands](#).

# Water scarcity could aggravate conflicts and pressure on migration



# Using the tools we have: the Water Convention

**Main results** since entry into force in 1996:



More than **90 transboundary water cooperation agreements** signed



Improvements in water quality, water management, ecosystems



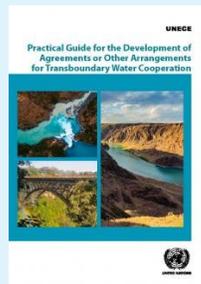
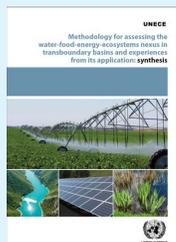
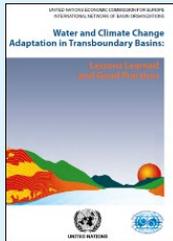
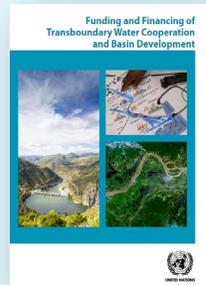
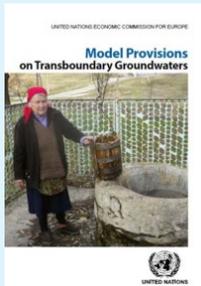
**52 Parties, 11 new Parties** since 2018 from Africa, Middle East, Latin America, 20 countries in accession, **130 countries** take part in activities



Convention supports countries in **climate change adaption, intersectoral cooperation, financing** etc.

# What does the the Water Convention offer to its Parties

## Policy development



## Capacity building and exchange of experience

Global workshop on conjunctive management of transboundary surface water and groundwater (16-17 October 2023, Geneva)

Global workshop on developing agreements (7-8 November 2023, Budapest)

Strategic Roundtable on Increasing Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector (13-14 November 2023, Geneva)

Global workshop on financing transboundary water cooperation (5-6 December 2023, Geneva)

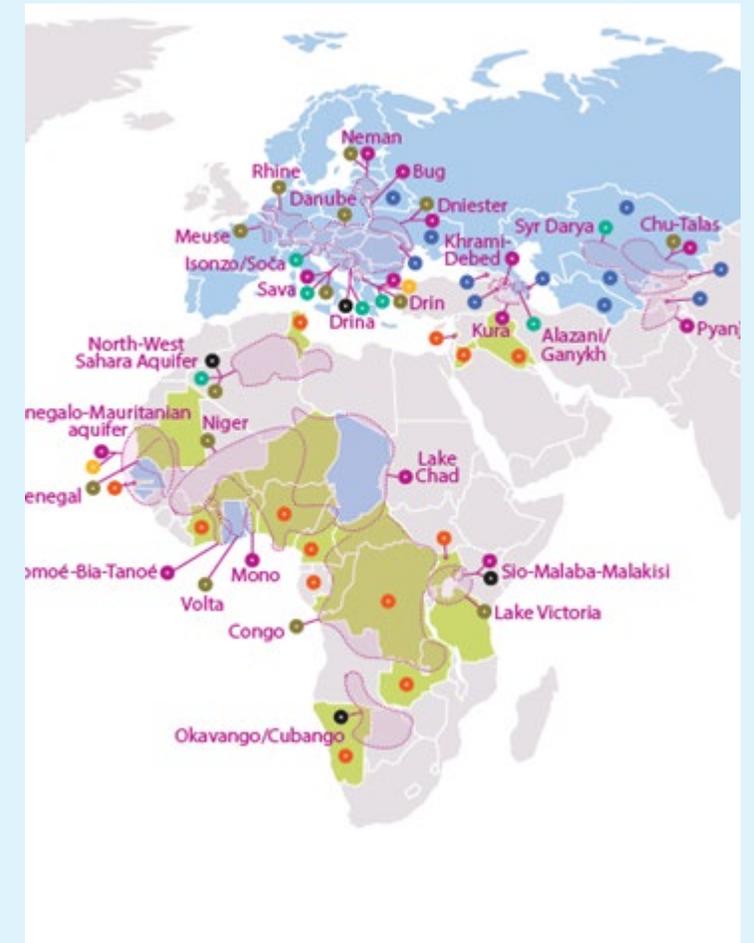
8th meeting of the Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus, (7-8 December 2023, Geneva)

Global workshop on transboundary climate change adaptation and mitigation (26-27 February 2024, Geneva)

Joint session of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (6-8 May 2024, Geneva)

Tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Ljubljana, 23–25 October 2024)

## Technical assistance on the ground



# Thank you!



WEB

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RESOURCES

[www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html)



# Using the tools we have: the Water Convention

## A global legal framework

To foster cooperation over transboundary waters (both surface and groundwaters) and ensure that they are sustainably and equitably managed

Based on the general principles of international water law:

- Do no harm
- Equitable and reasonable use
- Principle of cooperation

## An institutional framework

A UN global platform to develop policy and review progress of transboundary water cooperation



## A program of activities

