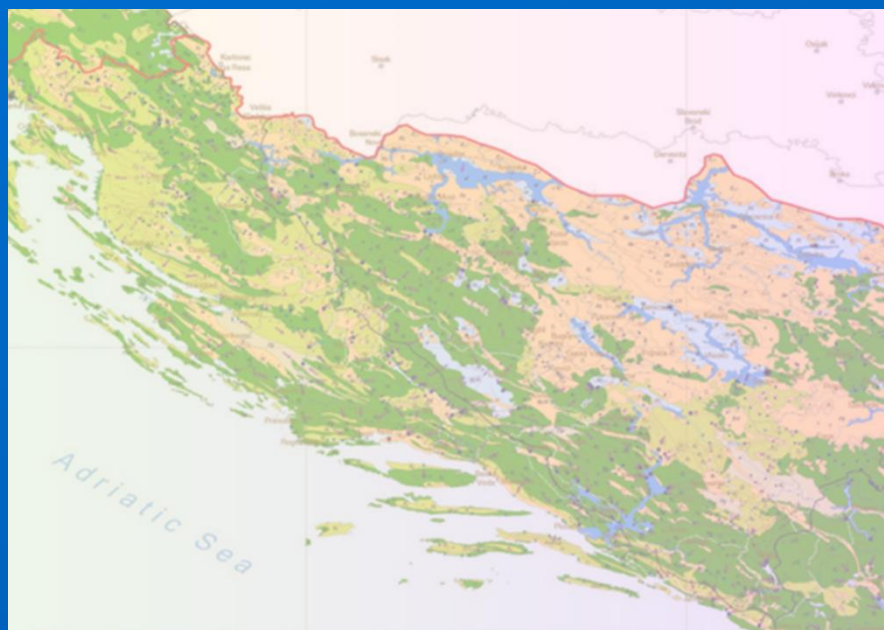


# DIKTAS II

Implementation of the strategic action program (SAP) of the Dinaric karst aquifer system:  
improving groundwater governance and sustainability of related ecosystems.



2nd in-person EXPERT MEETING

10-11 November 2025

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina



# MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND OPTIONS FOR UPGRADE

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## Output 1.2 Project document

Draft multilateral agreement on the establishment of Consultation and Information Exchange Body (CIE) and its Secretariat prepared for governments approval

Parties: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro

Project document: The CIE shall be open to other Dinaric countries including but not limited to Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia, Italy and Slovenia, sharing the Karst aquifer system, upon their request and approval from the CIE Secretariat.

# Background:

- Project document
- EU WFD
- Resolutions on the law of transboundary aquifers
- Water convention (1992) + Model provisions (2012)
- International practice

United Nations A/RES/63/124

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**General Assembly**

Distr.: General  
15 January 2009

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Sixty-third session  
Agenda item 75

**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly**  
*[on the report of the Sixth Committee (A/63/439)]*

**63/124. The law of transboundary aquifers**

*The General Assembly,*

*Having considered* chapter IV of the report of the International Law Commission on the work of its sixtieth session,<sup>1</sup> which contains the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers,

*Noting* that the Commission decided to recommend to the General Assembly (a) to take note of the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers in a resolution, and to annex the articles to the resolution; (b) to recommend to States concerned to make appropriate bilateral or regional arrangements for the proper management of their transboundary aquifers on the basis of the principles enunciated in the articles; and (c) to also consider, at a later stage, and in view of the importance of the topic, the elaboration of a convention on the basis of the draft articles;<sup>2</sup>

*Emphasizing* the continuing importance of the codification and progressive development of international law, as referred to in Article 13, paragraph 1 (a), of the Charter of the United Nations,

*Noting* that the subject of the law of transboundary aquifers is of major importance in the relations of States,

*Taking note* of the comments of Governments and the discussion in the Sixth Committee at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly on this topic,

1. *Welcomes* the conclusion of the work of the International Law Commission on the law of transboundary aquifers and its adoption of the draft articles and a detailed commentary on the subject;
2. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Commission for its continuing contribution to the codification and progressive development of international law;
3. *Also expresses its appreciation* to the International Hydrological Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 10 (A/63/10).*  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 49.

08-47823

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

## Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters



*Version 30.09.25; circulated to the national authorities in each country + explanation document*

Preamble

Part I : General provisions

Part II General principles

Part III Institutional framework: Consultation & Information Exchange body

Part IV Final provisions

➤ **Motivation of the Parties (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania and Montenegro) to enter into this agreement:**

- Awareness of the unique characteristics of Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System (DIKTAS),
- High vulnerability of karst,
- Protection of groundwater and dependent ecosystems in DIKTAS,
- Sustainable development.

➤ **Reference:**

- Water convention (1992) + Model provisions (2012), Protocol on Water and Health (1999),
- Convention on Biological Diversity (1992),
- WFD, GWD, Drinking Water Directive
- Resolutions on the law of transboundary aquifers (68/124 & 77/112)
- SDGs
- UN General Assembly resolutions on the right to water

➤ **Other general objectives:**

- Will of cooperation,
- Spirit of peace and stability,
- Achieve joint sustainable and equitable use and protection of DICTAS.

## ➤ Objective:

- Ensuring the protection and preservation of DOKTAS and its dependent ecosystems,
- Strengthening resilience on climate change.

## ➤ Scope:

- The use, protection, preservation, and management of the DOKTAS in the territories of the Parties,
- General principles, rules, and modalities for the management of DOKTAS under conditions of continuous and prolonged impacts of natural and anthropogenic activities.

## ➤ Purpose of the agreement:

- Establish an institutional framework for cooperation on DOKTAS,
- Define the framework and modalities for stakeholders' participation

### ➤ **Definitions:**

- definition of DICTAS: technical, geographic extension etc.;
- other definitions ex: aquifer system, transboundary impact, State party, Observer State (if any), sanitary protection zone, special protected areas etc.

→ Core principles of international law and international water law

### ➤ Cooperation

Basis: sovereign equality, territorial integrity, sustainable development, mutual benefit and good faith to attain equitable and reasonable utilization and appropriate protection of DOKTAS

### ➤ Equitable and reasonable utilization of DOKTAS:

Mainly:

- maximize the long-term benefits derived from its waters, and its dependent ecosystems,
- No use at a level that would prevent continuance of its effective functioning.

### ➤ Obligation not to cause significant harm

### ➤ Regular exchange of data:

- **Obligation not to cause significant harm**
    - through the use of DOKTAS or in undertaking activities
    - Take all appropriate measures to prevent the causing of significant harm to the other Parties
    - If a significant harm occurs the Party which has caused it shall take, in consultation with the affected Party, all appropriate response measures to eliminate or mitigate such harm, giving due consideration of the provisions of the current agreement.
  
  - **Regular exchange of data:**
    - collect, share and analyze data on the status and use of DOKTAS in their territories
    - based on a joint GIS system or other protocols
    - Objective: protect the resources, detect early pollution, and establish sanitary protection zones.
- ☞ Data and information to be collected and the protocols → clearly defined in the joint data sharing mechanism and regularly by the Consultation and Information Exchange body (CIE).

### ➤ Establishment of a Consultation and Information Exchange body (CIE)

Composed of the officers responsible for groundwater management in the States Parties

#### Responsible for:

- Supervising and periodically revising, at agreed intervals, the joint data sharing mechanism between the Parties,
- Supervising the joint monitoring network implemented in the agreed areas of the DOKTAS,
- Defining and agreeing upon the chemical and biological parameters to be monitored,
- Preparing a conceptual model of the DOKTAS,
- Receiving data collected through the monitoring network,
- Coordinating and centralizing all activities and projects related to DOKTAS,
- Coordinating all joint action programmes to be established in areas of transboundary concern
- Drafting and agreeing on the DOKTAS Rulebook and guidelines for the delineation of sanitary protection zones and measures for solid and liquid waste disposal, as well as on any other relevant topics as needed, to be submitted to the national authorities for adoption
- Deciding on the opening of the present Agreement to other Dinaric countries, including but not limited to Serbia, the Republic of North Macedonia, Italy, and Slovenia, which share the Karst aquifer system, upon their request, and submitting a recommendation for approval to the national authorities of the Parties.

The CIE meets every six months, or more if needed and upon request of one of its members.

Each Party will host the meeting on a rotating basis and serve as chair and Secretariat for the meeting until the next meeting. The hosting Party covers the costs of the meeting, and each Party covers the cost of its officer.

All decisions are adopted unanimously.

The language of the meetings of CIE will be English, and the minutes will be prepared in the official language of each Party.

The CIE will agree on its rules of functioning within a period of six months after the entry into force of this agreement.



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### ➤ National committees

Established within each country Party to the agreement, chaired by the national member of the CIE

Composed of main stakeholders involved in DIKTAS at the national level

The Committee meets before the meeting of the CIE, and discusses the specific needs of the Party and all other matters of concern to bring to the attention of the CIE.

Entry into force

Amendments

Dispute resolution (*reference to article 22 of the Water Convention, mediation, arbitration, International Court of Justice...*)

Withdrawal of a Party

Termination of the agreement

Important to involve the national authorities early in the process:

- Draft ToC and explanation document shared early October with a request to provide comments by end of October → so far no comments
- Draft agreement to be developed by 20 November, based on the draft ToC, will include comments if received by then
  - to be shared officially with the countries (by UNESCO) with the same explanation document:  
national authorities: Ministry in charge of water resources and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (will be involved in the negotiations)
- Organization of a high-level meeting (in person) with national authorities to discuss the agreement and provide comments *February 2026*
- Finalize draft agreement, and provide a consolidated version for transmission to the countries

# Thank you

