



## **CABRI-Volga**

Cooperation Along a Big River:  
Institutional coordination among stakeholders for  
environmental risk management in the Volga basin

**1<sup>st</sup> Expert Group Meeting,  
Nizhny Novgorod, 28-29 September 2005**

### **Briefing Note**

## **Expert Group 5 "Institutional Coordination and Cooperation"**

### **Objectives of the CABRI-Volga Project Phase "State-of-the-Art and Good Practices"**

- To provide the state-of-the-art in environmental risk management in large river basins
- To explore the status of coordination between institutions and multiple stakeholders, including civil society, business and water services providers, decision-makers and scientists
- To identify good and bad practices and lessons learned in coordination and cooperation between stakeholders

### **1. Introduction**

The first CABRI-Volga Expert Group Meeting in Nizhny Novgorod falls into the project's initial phase during which the state-of-the-art and good practices are being identified and analysed. Expert Group 5 (EG5) focuses on how to enhance *institutional coordination*, including design and performance of institutions, and to strengthen *partnerships of multiple stakeholders* in environmental risk management in large river basins in the EU and in the Volga River basin.

EG5 provides aggregation and comparisons of insights and lessons learned on coordination/cooperation issues from thematic areas covered by other four expert groups (environmental rehabilitation, natural disasters risk reduction, natural resources and transport mobility). It assesses major existing problems and gaps between 'design and action'. For this purpose it concentrates on exploring the following framing questions that are cross-cutting to all CABRI thematic areas:

- How to improve institutional designs for administrative coordination (vertical and horizontal) between authorities at various levels responsible for environmental risk management in large river basins
- How to develop stable partnerships and promote coordination of interests and cooperation between stakeholder within integrated river basin management
- How to strengthen public participation and awareness on environmental risk reduction, and particularly of the local communities
- What are the common and specific coordination problems for large river basins in the EU and the Volga basin and how to enhance cooperation in their sustainable development in the European context

## 2. EG5 Discussion Topics

As the time of the expert brain-storming session in expert groups is limited to one full day about a dozen of EG1 experts from the EU and Russia focus on three major discussion topics.

- Coordination mechanisms within integrated river basin management
- Partnerships and cooperation between stakeholders in large river basins
- Insights from EU- Russia cooperation in environmental risk management in large river basins

### 2.1. Coordination mechanisms within integrated river basin management

Currently, practical application of principles and mechanisms of **integrated river basin management** for the purposes of environmental risk reduction faces a number of serious problems and barriers. In this context a series of questions are posed for expert assessments:

- What are the most difficult problems hindering implementation of integrated river basin management mechanisms? Do you see any options and means for overcoming major barriers?
- How to coordinate in practice a) interests and actions of various sectors and groups of water users and b) national, regional and municipal policies?
- How the new RF Water Code suggests to approach these problems?
- What can be the new roles of Volga Basin Water Administrations acquired in a cause of administrative reform in Russia? What are the current problems of BWA performance?
- What are the successes and failures in activities of the River Po Basin Management Administration? How coordination problems are solved in the EU context?
- What are major lessons learned from national practices of creation and functioning of Basin Agreements (Rhine, Volga)?

### 2.2. Partnerships and cooperation between stakeholders

Until today, **cooperation** between and **coordination** of interests and actions of **multiple stakeholder groups** both in natural disasters and in environmental risk reduction in large river basins is a stumbling block in many institutional schemes of sustainable development of river basins in the EU and Russia. That's why experts are asked to answer the following questions:

- What particular approaches and mechanisms are applied in the world practice and in the Volga basin in particular to enhance cooperation and coordination between multiple stakeholders?
- What institutional schemes including laws, administrative structures, strategies and programmes, financial mechanisms, economic tools and incentives are used for this purpose in environmental risk management and in floods risk reduction?
- What are major lessons learned from coordination of efforts (success and failures) in practices of flood risk reduction during the 2005 spring freshet in the Volga Basin?
- How business is involved in coordination issues? What are the experiences of the leading energy produces RAO UES and the Volga Cascade in environmental risk reduction?
- How to increase involvement of civil society into environmental amelioration in large river basins? What are major problems in local communities' participation in natural disaster risk reduction?
- What is the role of the newly established public basin councils in Russia in solving potential conflicts between various stakeholder groups?
- What interesting examples of coordination/cooperation between stakeholders from experts' experiences can be identified?
- What particular experiences in effective coordination can be learned from each other by the EU and Russia?

### 2.3. EU-Russia cooperation

The EU enlargement has positioned it closer to Russia in general, and to the Volga Basin, in particular. It has created new possibilities for **formation of intensive communications** (trade, transport, cultural, information, etc.) in Russia in general, and in the Volga Basin as well. In the context of coordinating the **Road Maps** between the EU and Russia, and particularly of the Road Map dealing with environment the expert assessments of the following questions are of utmost importance:

- Could the EU be considered as one of the stakeholders affecting the decision-making process in the Volga Basin? What are the interests of the EU in environmental risk reduction and transport mobility in the Volga Basin? What is the stakeholders' 'twinning' potential?
- Why at the current stage of the EU-Russia negotiations the *common environmental space* has not been incorporated into respective Road Map, but a vast list of its elements (along with supporting economic factors) is included into *common economic space*? What implications it has for the Volga Basin?
- Is it possible to create *common environmental space* on the basis of transfer of environmental mechanisms and tools from the EU to Russia? Should Russia develop such mechanisms independently from the EU? Or, is it preferable that Russia borrows certain mechanisms from the EU with the following adaptation of these mechanisms to the national specifics?
- What might be the major requirements for adaptation of 'standard' European mechanisms while being transferred to Russia? What particular lessons can be learned from adaptation of environmental mechanisms and tools in the past, including those applied in the Volga Basin? What are the common features and differences in approaches of the EU and Russian experts to the problem of adaptation?

**Please feel free to suggest additional questions for the EG5 session. If possible, send them to [enikitina@mtu-net.ru](mailto:enikitina@mtu-net.ru) [vi-kotov@mtu-net.ru](mailto:vi-kotov@mtu-net.ru) before 21 September. Thank you!**

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