



Международная
ассоциация
хранителей реки
Eco-TIRAS

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STATEMENT
**Of the Coordination Council of the International Association of
Dniester River Keepers Eco-TIRAS due to increasing anthropogenic
pressure on the Transboundary Dniester River**

The International Association of Dniester River Keepers, bringing together more than 50 non-governmental environmental organizations from the Dniester River basin of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, expresses extreme concern about the continuing efforts of Ukrainian Government and representatives of big business entities of Ukraine for hydropower development on Dniester River.

The recent years showed a growing water shortage in Dniester due to hydro-construction on the background of climate change, entailing aridization of Northern Black Sea region.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers in the summer of 2016 without the agreement of the environmental Ministry of Environment adopted the Programme of hydropower development until 2026, providing for the construction of six hydroelectric power stations in the upper Dniester, and in December it publishes the draft Strategy of Country Energy Development until 2035, which also provides for the construction of a cascade of six hydropower plants in the upper Dniester. Moreover, they already announced a tender on a feasibility study for this construction. This occurs under conditions where the capital of the Republic of Moldova in previous two years has already experienced a threat of disruption of drinking water supply, and the Ukrainian million city of Odessa and other cities in the south of Ukraine depends entirely on the drinking water supply from Dniester.

Being under strong anthropogenic influence, the Dniester basin will be unable to provide the same volume of its ecosystem services. In fact, hydraulic construction in Ukraine is taking away these services from the population of middle and lower Dniester, materializing them in hydropower, which becomes the property of a very limited circle of oligarchs and produces a growing impoverishment and deterioration of both countries' inhabitants in the downstream, which is contrary to the sustainable development goals declared by the United Nations.

Please note that in accordance with international policies, transboundary watercourses and the usage of their water is treated as a potential source of international conflicts and therefore we propose the leadership of both countries to take all measures in order to avoid aggravation of the situation. We are confident that the regional stability is also the interest of European Union and international community.

Best international practice in solving such conflicts is the creation and enforcement of a comprehensive basin agreement, which is the basis for integrated solution of all issues concerning the basin management of transboundary river. The basis for this has been already laid by the Basin Treaty signed on 29 November 2012 in Rome between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on cooperation in the field of preservation and sustainable development of the Dniester River basin.

We draw the attention of Moldovan authorities on the senselessness of discussing and concluding under these new conditions an intergovernmental agreement on the operation of the Dniester hydropower node which is now under bilateral negotiations.

Based on international experience, we argue that there is no other reasonable approach in resolving the Dniester-related growing crisis, but the following sequence of actions of the two neighbouring countries:

1. Ratification by Ukraine and entry into force of the Dniester Basin Treaty.
2. Establishment, in accordance with the Treaty, of a joint river basin Commission.
3. Transferring the functions for reviewing all issues related to Dniester to this Commission.
4. Evaluation of Dniester's hydropower potential; adoption and implementation of jointly deliberated decisions on basin management, including management plans, proceeding from the interests of all users and peoples of neighbouring countries.

We are confident that the intention of Ukrainian leadership to create a cascade of six hydropower plants on the Upper Dniester is not justified either from an environmental or an economic point of view, it is a real source for international conflict, for impoverishment of the population and leads to degradation of the river and its ecosystems, it does not meet the internationally recognized principle of "fair use" of the transboundary rivers, and therefore should be reviewed.

We believe that the way to improve the situation, to solve the energy problems and effective Dniester management lie entirely in the sphere of enforcement by the parties of commitments assumed in the framework of international agreements, while relying on the best international practices and strengthening national democratic institutions with real participation of civil society in decision-making process.

We draw the attention of the OSCE, the European Union and other international institutions, which according to their mandate are interested in regional stability in Europe, to the need for immediate intervention in order to achieve a sustainable solution to the issue of using the transboundary Dniester River basin in order to avoid escalation of the situation and emergence of a new conflict outbreak in Europe.

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