

8th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

Cooperation with the neighboring Countries Case of South Caucasus

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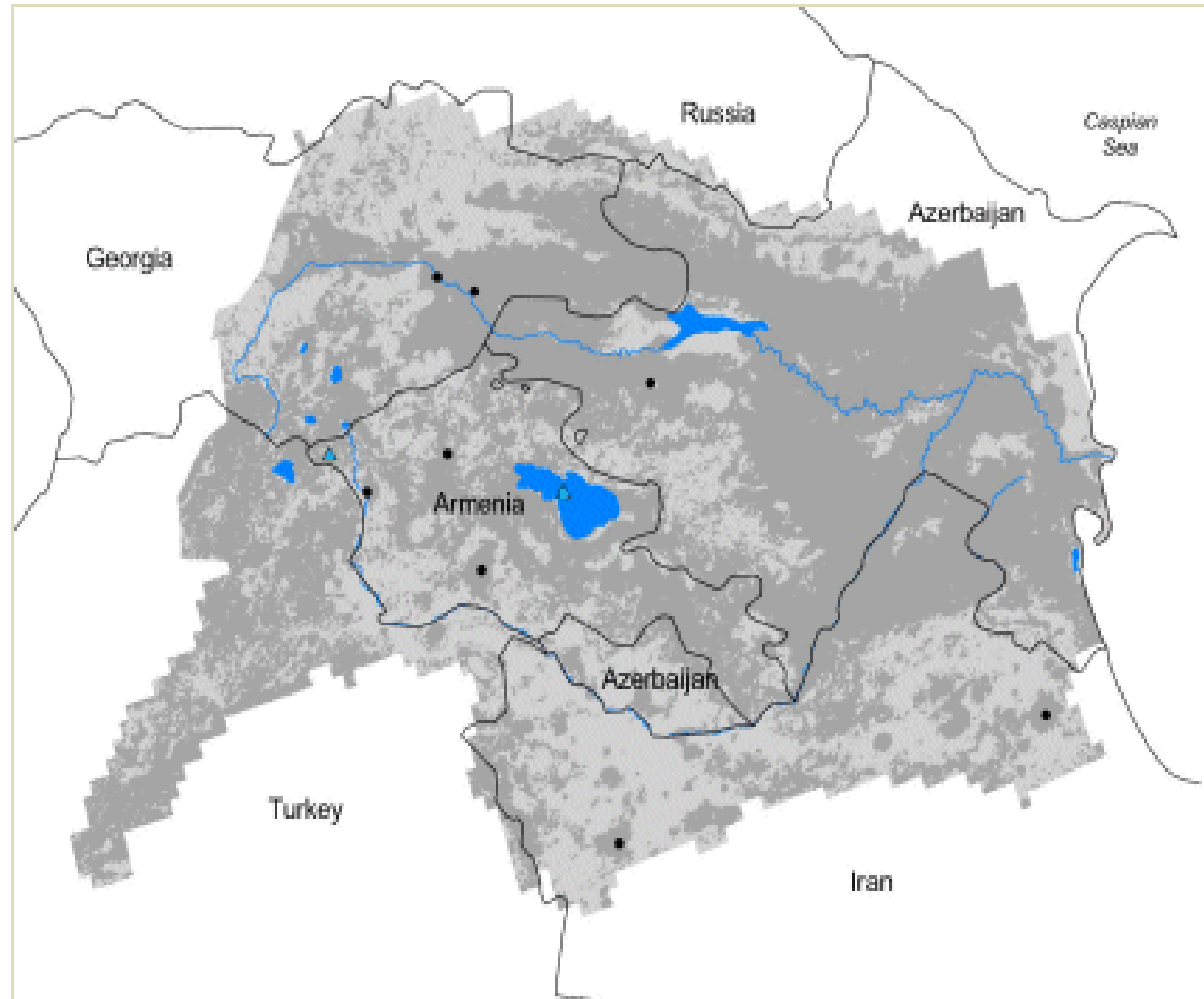
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Kura-Araks Basin

The Kura and the Araks rivers and their tributaries cover three countries (AZERBAIJAN, ARMENIA, GEORGIA) and parts of Russia, Turkey and Iran.

The total area of the basin is more than 200 000 km².

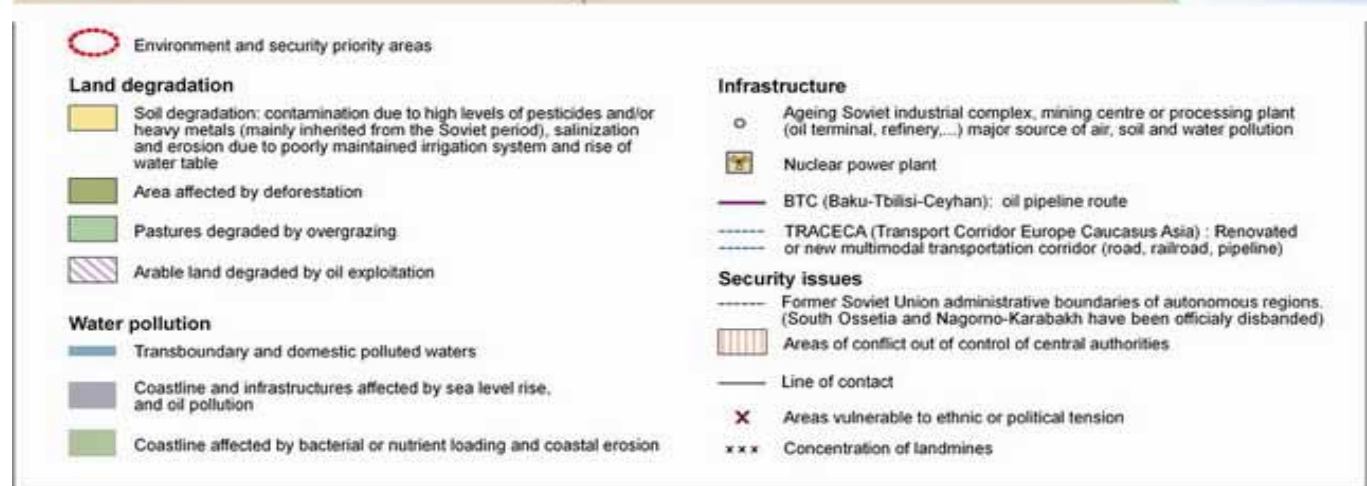
The Kura River catchment area is about 188 000 km² and the Araks catchment area is about 102 000 km².



- After the USSR decline the South Caucasus countries is also knew for the high level of geo-political instability during the lasts decades.

- The Kura-Araks River Basin is localized at the heart of this conflict area.

- Because of this territorial conflict the direct cooperation between countries is almost impossible.



Quality and Quantity Problems

- Whereas Armenia and Georgia have abundant underground water reserves, which are used as a major source of drinking water, Azerbaijan is almost entirely reliant on the Kura River for all types of water uses.
- Water shortage is acute for Georgia and Azerbaijan, since rainfall disappears from west to east of the basin. The average annual precipitation decline from Turkey to Azerbaijan, where the river flows into the Caspian Sea. Similarly, evaporation rates soar from west to east. Drought periods in the Kura Basin are very common
- Cities and industrial centers are the main sources of pollution, with low capacity of water treatment facilities or their absence in general. Pollution includes organic pollution from untreated sewage (highest share of pollution), heavy metals from mining, hydrocarbons and PCBs. Nutrients and pesticides from agriculture, sediment load from deforestation and flood irrigation practices is also common.

International Legal framework

Country	Helsinki Convention	London Protocol	Industrial Accidents Convention	Aarhus Convention	Espoo Convention
Armenia	-	1999 - S	1997 - R	2001 - R	1997 - R
Azerbaijan	2000 - R	2000 - R	2004 - R	1999 - R	1999 - R
Georgia	-	1999 - S	-	2000-R	-

S - signature, R - ratification

Will accession or ratification of the Convention by the other countries of the region solve all existing problems of Kura River Basin or the up-stream countries will dealt just with the polluter-pays principle ?

Does Political will exist?

- Each of the South Caucasus countries develop a specific political will for international cooperation, but a “joint document” which regulates the protection and use of trans-boundary rivers and lakes approved by all countries of the South Caucasus doesn't exist

Practical Way of Improvement

- The introduction of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) could be a way to prevent water resources scarcity, industrial pollution, mining activities and the tensions related to water works.
- Common activities for Introduction of EU FWD
- Institutionalisation option towards coordination of international aid

EU Funded Project on “Creation of Enabling Environment for Integrated Management of the Kura-Aras Trans-boundary River Basin”

Overall Objectives

Create and strengthen an enabling environment for integrated management of the Kura-Aras trans-boundary river basin by building on and adding value to the existing initiatives

Specific objectives

- Gain a consensus-based agreement between the three South Caucasus countries, donor organisations and other concerned parties on further steps towards improved and creation of basis for sustainable cooperation and coordination through establishment of regional institutional mechanisms for major participating countries of the Caucasus, including governments, supporting control and coordination of projects (including donor ones) for integrated management of the Kura-Aras trans-boundary rivers basin
- *Adoption of Road Maps for assessment of progress in sustainable management of the Kura-Aras trans-boundary rivers basin with view to introduction of the EU Water Framework Directive*

Thank you for attention!

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