

**STATEMENT OF THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING IN MOSCOW, 5-6 MARCH 2003
ON “STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ON WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”**

1. We, representatives of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), EC member states, Switzerland, the European Commission, international and non-governmental organisations, have gathered in Moscow, Russian Federation, on March 5th and 6th, 2003 – the international Year of Freshwater – to discuss the status, challenges and commitments of implementation of the “Strategic Partnership on Water for Sustainable Development” which was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002.
2. We reaffirm our commitment to co-operation on water-related issues between East and West, and the Strategic Partnership as its component, directed at implementation of water policy aspects of the “East-West Environmental Partnership”, which was also launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
3. We recognise the challenges and problems that EECCA countries face in the area of water supply and sanitation and in the area of sustainable management of water resources, including transboundary and regional seas issues, as well as in other areas, as mentioned in the Strategic Partnership Declaration.
4. We support the structure of partnership proposed in the programme document "EU Water Initiative, EECCA-component" which was discussed at the meeting in Moscow, and recognise the Danish role in development and co-ordination of this initiative on behalf of EU. We also recognise the role of Russia and other EECCA countries in advancement of this initiative.
5. We recognise the need for efficient mechanisms for improving co-ordination and communication, and for developing the Strategic Partnership further. We request the Organising Committee which was established for preparation of the High Level Meeting to take the necessary measures to support the interim Secretariat in continuing its activities up to the Kiev Ministerial Conference in May 2003, and to support the chairpersons of the working groups formed at the meeting in Moscow in further shaping the initiative.
6. We appeal to the chairpersons of the working groups to continue their work for further development of the Strategic Partnership in general and its building blocks in particular, until appropriate mechanisms are created. We welcome the final document of the Consultative Meeting on the Environment, Water and Security of countries of Central Asia and “Invitation for partnership” (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 31 January 2003) presented at the High Level Meeting, reflecting a subregional approach to implementation of the Strategic Partnership.
7. We call on all EECCA countries and other interested partners to join this initiative and to take part in further development of the Strategic Partnership, for instance through participation in the Working Group designing the initiative. We welcome the great interest and active participation of the civil society in preparation of the outcomes of this meeting and confirm our commitment to working in co-operation with all stakeholders on further development and implementation of the Strategic Partnership.
8. We encourage Denmark and the Russian Federation to present the Strategic Partnership, on behalf of EECCA and EU countries and stakeholders, at the European Day at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto on March 21, 2003, and also at the Kiev Ministerial Conference.
9. We express our deep gratitude to the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, to the Danish Environmental Protection Agency (DEPA), to DHI Water and Environment, and to the Russian Regional Environmental Center for organising this meeting.

Approved in Moscow on March 6, 2003