

Summary

Protection of International Watercourses

The purpose of the Thesis is to analyze the present degree of the protection of international watercourses and to describe three main levels: international law, European law and Czech law.

Although the issue of environmental protection and sustainable use of international watercourses is considered to be one of the most significant problems of the present society, the topic has been rather neglected by Czech scholars. Analytical, logical and historical methods were primarily applied in the study. The thesis is composed of four chapters, which are furthermore divided into sections and subsections.

The term “international watercourses” usually designates rivers, lakes and groundwater sources shared by two or more states.

Chapter one deals with international customary law (especially equitable utilization and no harm principle), international treaty law (global and regional cooperation as well as non-binding documents) and selected major cases important for the evolution of protection of water. In the past, international water law concerned mostly with allocating water supply between riparian states. Nowadays the law concentrates more on permissible uses of watercourses and preventing pollution of freshwater resources as well as water ecosystems.

The second chapter examines Czech regional cooperation in the field of protection of watercourses. The chapter consists of three sections. The second section presents the cornerstone of the chapter and provides information about regional cooperation of the Czech Republic in managing and protecting rivers Labe, Dunaj and Odra. According to the study, the above mentioned regional cooperation proves to be essential in protection of international watercourses. Contrary to global treaties, regional treaties, which cope with one specific river basin, are capable to set accurate obligations necessary for appropriate protection of watercourses. All three rivers in question are subjects to regional treaties, which settle basic obligations for states (eliminate pollution, information exchange, etc.). The treaties also established international commissions with entitlement to fulfil aims stated in the treaties.

Third chapter details about European law. The European legal framework for the protection of clean waters is created by Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. This directive defines common principles, approaches and requirements for water management (surface waters, coastal waters as well as groundwater) in the European

Union. The primary objective of the directive is represented by good water status (in both chemical and ecological parameters). The directive presents the most comprehensive legislation in the field of protection of waters.

The last chapter deals with Czech water law. The study focuses particularly on water planning which is believed to be most relevant instrument in protection of international watercourses.