Title of the Special Session: **Progress and challenges in stormwater management in the CEE region**

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Description of the Special Session topic: This special session is organized by the Local Organizing Committee to promote sustainable stormwater management (SWM) in Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) and attract professionals from these countries to share their experience with the international urban drainage community at the ICUD conference. Compared to the leading countries in stormwater management, the process of sustainable SWM implementation in the CEE countries has been delayed for various reasons, including: (i) the international isolation of the CEE countries during the second half of the 20th century, and (ii) the transition to market economy after the political changes in 1989/1990, which was in the early phases much more oriented on purely economic issues rather than environmental and social aspects. Until 2010, virtually no sustainable stormwater strategies have been implemented in this region, except for isolated projects of environmental enthusiasts and/or EU financed projects. Today, the traditional centralized stormwater management is a barrier to the sustainable development of cities. The need of legal framework, methodologies, technical standards and incorporation of sustainability into the urban planning process is apparent. The session will address consist a number of sub-themes, e.g. CSO control, stormwater fee, quantitative and qualitative standards, urban planning respecting sustainable SWM limits etc. However, there are obstacles limiting the implementation progress of sustainable SWM, especially conservatism of local and national authorities and lobby of developers. The special session will focus on (i) regulatory framework, (ii) technical framework and (iii) urban planning. It will be handled both from the perspective of city development/planning and operation of urban drainage system, bringing these two key pillars together with mutual advantage. This session allows sharing of experience with sustainable SWM implementation in countries with similar history and promotes mutual learning and transfer of experience in this region.

Targeted participants: Even though the special session is focused on participants from CEE countries, mainly from Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and the Czech Republic, participants from other transitional economy countries (e.g., the Balkan region) are also welcome. The session organizers are hoping to attract participants from local, regional and national authorities, members of national chapters of international water associations (IWA and EWA national members), and technical institutes. Prior to the event an effort will be made to secure participation of experts from various sectors (designers, municipal decision makers). The targeted group does not regularly participate in the ICUD conferences; however, one of the main goals of the Prague’s conference is to bring people from CEE to the urban drainage community. The expected audience is 50+ participants. We believe that conference participants from outside of CEE countries will also find this session attractive, because it promotes one of the primary goals of JCUD – the ambition of developing and promoting sustainable and integrated urban water management.
Proposed format of the Special Session including the duration: The special session program is planned for 225 minutes. It will consist of three thematic sessions, 75 minutes each: the first one will focus on the legal framework, the second one on CSO and stormwater regulations, and the third one on urban planning incorporating stormwater management. Each part will start with an invited keynote providing an overview of the topic (15 min + 5 min discussion), followed by three presentations (10 min each, without discussion) selected from abstracts submitted in the open call for abstracts. These presentations will be followed by a 20 min panel discussion with all presenters. In the last 5 min, a short session summary will be offered by the convener and/or co-conveners. We plan to invite speakers from both the CEE countries and the countries with extensive experience in sustainable SWM, as it will allow transferring positive experiences to, and within, the CEE region, and help create closer contacts between the CEE region and the JCUD community.