

# Hydrology or psychology?

Mario Cerutti

International Meuse Commission

Executive secretary

# How can cooperation over transboundary surface and groundwater resources be achieved in a sustainable and equitable manner?

**It is not evident that cooperation starts**

- **International basin cooperation was a rare phenomenon in Europe until 1994.**
- **It is now the general rule**

**Cooperation Meuse and Scheldt**

- **Two virtually equal conventions**
- **Decisions through consensus**
- **Permanent secretariats**



# What is sustainable and equitable cooperation? (1)

**Partners develop sustainability by cooperating over a longer period, by producing common results, by developing solutions for problems.**

**Ministerial guidance and political involvement will help.**

**Also technical experts should be involved.**

**It takes time, patience and exercises**

**It is not at all evident that cooperation is sustainable.**



## What is sustainable and equitable cooperation? (2)

**Technical, economical, political, societal and cultural characteristics will differ**

**The others will not be like you are**

**Equitability helps to bridge the differences**

**Equitability means acceptance of differences**

**Equitability is a condition for sustainable cooperation**

**Diversity is an added value and creates opportunities**

**Diversity and equitability can go together**



# **What are the mechanisms and tools that support the achievement of cooperation, while nurturing genuine cooperation?**

**High level agreement and umbrella instruments**

**Governing body and some rules of procedure**

**Meetings, platform for expert groups, capacity building**

**Process management, secretariat**

**Accept:**

- **no common actions but coordination of individual actions**
- **different agendas but same long term objectives**
- **different methods and plans but transboundary coherence**
- **different languages**



# **International commissions, arbitration commissions, transboundary basin authorities: What can be learned?**

**Learned:**

**Sufficient time and patience is needed to create a commission**

**To develop the cooperation one needs a working organisation**

**People need to become accustomed to the new situation**

**It demands additional national efforts, new communication and working methods, creativity and flexibility.**

**Expectations and ambitions may differ and may continue to differ**

**Acceptance develops with time and must be maintained**



## **Are principles and tools used in one region transferable to other regions? And if so how would that be possible?**

**Compare “brother” Rhine with his twin sisters Meuse and Scheldt**

**The point of departure is virtually equal**

**Cooperation in the Rhine basin started in 1950 and was at a high level in 1975**

**The cooperation in the Meuse and Scheldt basins started in 1995**

**Attempts to transfer failed even on short distance!**

- **European transboundary basin cooperation is governed by one single WFD, but methods of the river commissions differ**
- **Basin cooperation is partner cooperation**
- **Each basin should develop its own cooperation**
- **Principles, tools and experiences are available and should be exchanged.**



# CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

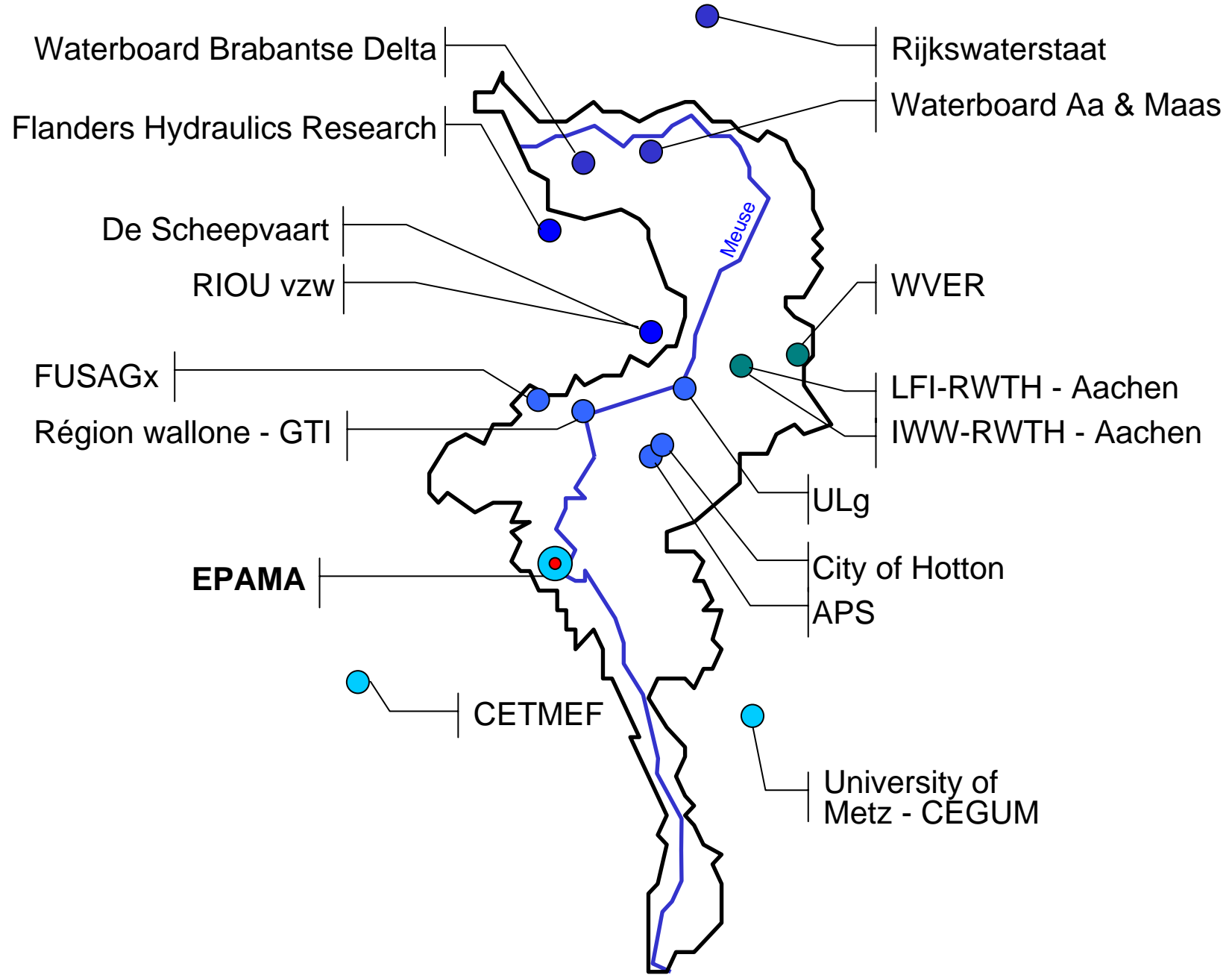
**Sustainable cooperation can be reached in transboundary basins and aquifers when the partners**

- **meet regularly**
- **accept differences**
- **find a balance between the (geo)hydrological and the administrative systems**
- **jointly develop planning schemes and projects**
- **are prepared to coordinate their measures**
- **and intensify their cooperation when necessary (climate change?!)**





# AMICE: Adaptation of the Meuse to the Impacts of Climate Evolutions



Thank you for your attention