



RESEAU INTERNATIONAL DES ORGANISMES DE BASSIN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS RED INTERNACIONAL DE ORGANISMOS DE CUENCA



National Administration
"APELE ROMANE"



The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
Department of Water, Forests and Fishery



The National Institute of Hydrology
and Water Management

12th "EUROPE-INBO" INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

**Bucharest, Romania
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RAMADA MAJESTIC Hotel******

"EUROPE-INBO DECLARATION OF BUCHAREST"

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The 12th conference of the "EUROPE-INBO" group, which took place in Bucharest, Romania, from 12 to 15 November 2014, at the invitation of the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Climate Change - Department of Water, Forestry and Fisheries -, the National Agency "APELE ROMANE" and the National Institute of Hydrology and Water Management, gathered **xxx** participants, representatives of national administrations and basin organizations as well as of NGOs, companies, international and regional organizations, coming from **xxx** countries (country list appended).

Established within INBO in 2003 in Valencia, Spain, the "EUROPE-INBO" Group of European Basin Organizations for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) aims at enriching the implementation of water policies in Europe, especially the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) with its practical field experience to support the Candidate Countries and disseminate the principles and tools of European water-related Directives, especially to EU neighbouring partner countries in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and the Mediterranean.

As part of INBO, the Central and Eastern European Network of Basin Organizations (CEENBO), the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), and the new Network of Basin Organizations of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA - NBO), facilitate, in their respective regions, the exchanges of experience and discussions on basin management in an enlarged European context.

The "EUROPE-INBO" group holds annual plenary assemblies: Valencia (Spain) in 2003, Krakow (Poland) in 2004, Namur (Belgium) in 2005, Megeve (France) in 2006, Rome (Italy) in 2007, Sibiu (Romania) in 2008, Stockholm (Sweden) in 2009, Megeve (France) in 2010, Oporto (Portugal) in 2011, Istanbul (Turkey) in 2012 and Plovdiv (Bulgaria) in 2013..

The work of the 12th "EUROPE-INBO 2014" International Conference in Bucharest was organized around four successive roundtables addressing the following issues:

- Preparation of the WFD 2nd Basin Management Plans (2016 - 2021);
- Presentation of the results of the Workshop on Natural Water Retention Measures and River Restoration as well as the studies and guidance developed within the CIS;
- Implementation and funding of Programmes of Measures;
- Water governance in Transboundary Basins: WFD International Districts; Role and means of International Commissions; Bi and Multilateral Agreements and Conventions.

It should be reminded that, for INBO members, the term "basin" covers the basins of rivers, lakes and aquifers.

xx papers were presented during the conference.

Prior to the EUROPE-INBO conference, a technical workshop was held gathering field stakeholders, decision-makers, and members of the EUROPE-INBO group. This workshop focused on restoring rivers and the Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM), and the means to improve WFD implementation with better integration of European Directives and basin management. The workshop aimed to raise awareness of these approaches, to highlight the links between the directives and the multiple advantages of these measures, and to work together on how to communicate on the restoration of rivers and benefits of NRWM and on the ways to mobilize the stakeholders; who may be involved in practical projects in the field.

The main topics were:

- Better integration of European directives and policies through measures to restore rivers and NWRM;
- Better commitments with local communities in projects for ecosystem restoration.

The recommendations resulting from this work were presented at the conference during roundtable 2.

Members of the EUROPE-INBO group made recommendations to further improve water resources management in the European Union and Partner Countries relying on this experience in particular.

General Recommendations

Participants strongly welcomed the launching of the peer-review process as part of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) at European level. This initiative will allow structuring exchanges between the authorities involved in the preparation and

implementation of the WFD River Basin Management Plans. Since its creation, EUROPE-INBO has been supporting this commitment of exchanges and mutual learning and therefore fully agrees with the initiative and to provide support.

1- Preparation of WFD 2nd Management Plans (2016 - 2021) focusing on: Integration of water quantity issues; Adaptation to climate change; Better integration with other EU Directives (Flood and Marine Strategy, Habitats, fauna and flora) and with other sectoral policies (agriculture, energy, navigation...)

As the responsible authorities are entering the last phase of preparation of the WFD 2nd management plans, the necessary coordination between the management plan processes and content appears more obvious (especially for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Flood Directive and the WFD).

The participants welcomed current initiatives, such as holding joint meetings between the Water, Marine Environment and Biodiversity Managers at European level, and the organization by the European Commission of a workshop on the policies in these three sectors in December 2014.

Now, this type of approximation may also be beneficial to national or basin authorities to ensure better synergy between the public policies in these sectors but also from a technical point of view to improve the integration of respective objectives and means to be achieved during the preparation of River Basin Management Plans and associated Programmes of Measures.

Coordinating planning across sectors and at different levels is a key success factor for a large number of European, national, regional and local policies, Although this process seems simple, and mainly requires improved communication and cooperation, in practice, there are not many concrete examples of effective coordination mechanisms.

Since the publication of Water Scarcity and Drought Policy review in 2012 as part of the preparation of the Blueprint, there has been progress with a better consideration of the quantitative issues in WFD management plans and tools. This is particularly the case through the production of guidance documents on E-flows or on water accounts under the CIS. The generalization of "studies on withdrawable volumes" in France, or the development of scarcity and drought management plans in other Member States, also shows strong ties between the achievement of environmental objectives and the quantitative aspects.

2- Presentation of the results of the Workshop on Natural Water Retention Measures and River Restoration as well as the studies and guidance developed within the CIS

With regard to the WFD, in 2012, the Blue Print showed that non-point source pollution and hydro-morphology were significant pressures affecting rivers. Thus, greater efforts must be made to deal with these pressures to achieve good ecological status of water as required by the WFD. One way forward is to improve the integration of European directives and policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy, WFD, Flood Directive, Habitats Directive and the Renewable Energy Directive so that the measures proposed for reducing pollution and restoring river hydro-morphology can contribute to a wider range of objectives for policies and directives. In addition, better integrated basin management is necessary to implement measures and deal with these multiple pressures. These measures include the restoration and maintenance of water ecosystems by natural means.

There is also a growing interest in Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM) to improve water status as regards hydro-morphology and non-point source pollution and for better flood management. In late 2013, the DG ENV launched a project dedicated to the integration of Natural Retention Measures in river basin management. This NWRM initiative has two goals:

to develop a structured knowledge base on NWRM, easily accessible in the Water Information System for Europe (WISE); and contribute to the development of a "community of NWRM Stakeholders" active at European level. This has been achieved by the launching of various national workshops and the development of a practical handbook to support the implementation and design of NWRM.

In this context, the EUROPE-INBO conference is a real opportunity to mobilize basin authorities and managers on the issue of restoration and water retention by natural means, and its multiple benefits for the implementation of water policies. A workshop was held on 12 November on this issue, and the results were presented in the second roundtable.

The workshop participants highlighted the following thoughts:

1. How to integrate European directives and policies through river restoration measures and NWRM. The restoration of water bodies can support the goals of several important European water-related policies, and a better integration of the directives, such as the WFD, Flood Directive, Renewable Energy Directive and the Habitats Directive, is needed for these measures to work together. NWRM can be part of this, as these measures aim to integrate water resources management, the reduction of flood risks and the conservation and restoration of aquatic environments:
 - a) How to establish links and exchanges between sectors to better integrate different policies?
 - b) How to contact basin managers, politicians, decision-makers, on the various benefits of approaches to restore rivers and NWRM?
 - c) How to mobilize and convince partners in other sectors to participate in a restoration project and NWRM?
 - d) For better integration, what work scale is needed and why? What tools are available in different countries to facilitate the measures to restore rivers?

2. Better commitment with local communities in ecosystem restoration projects

River restoration projects can bring changes to local people, in their environment and activities; therefore the implementation of restoration projects relies on good communication with and involvement of local communities. It is necessary to share ways to better work with local stakeholders, local decision-makers, local authorities and the general public to raise awareness of the services provided by the restoration and maintenance of aquatic environments and promote education programmes.

- a) How to convince and mobilize elected representatives for river restoration and NWRM projects?
- b) How to communicate on river restoration and NWRM, and on what they can do?
- c) How to work with local communities? What tools are available in the various countries that make restoration measures possible?
- d) How to mobilize financial resources for river restoration projects?

Commentaire sur Guidance document on E-Flows ??

In spite of growing evidence, lack of knowledge and awareness of the effectiveness and multiple benefits of NWRM remains the biggest obstacle to their implementation on a large scale. In addition, prior assessments carried out in different planning processes (sector) allow only rarely considering simultaneously different NWRM benefits and cost-effectiveness in their contribution in achieving the objectives of multiple policies.

The integration and coordination of planning across sectors and at different levels is vital for many European policies and especially for NWRM. NWRM can make a major contribution to achieving the objectives of the Flood Directive and the Water Framework Directive. Their use should be promoted in future planning cycles of the WFD and Flood Directive. In addition, NWRM can help achieve the objectives of the "Birds" and "Habitats" Directives, e.g. as measures to achieve favourable conservation status, the connectivity requirements of Natura 2000 and the restoration goals of the European Biodiversity Strategy 2020 (Target 2). To take full advantage of the multiple benefits, the selection of the most suitable NWRM is one

that takes into account the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP), Flood Risk Management Plans, Natura 2000 Management Plans and the Rural Development Programmes. If we consider that the implementation of large-scale NWRM can be very challenging, particularly with regard to compensation and land consolidation, there is especially a need to coordinate river basin planning with land use management and planning.

Limited financial resources are often considered as a barrier to NWRM implementation. While a variety of funding sources is available at European level and at other levels, the use of these resources to finance NWRM remains limited. In parallel with improved coordination between sectoral planning processes, the combination and integration of different sources of funding would also help to facilitate the large-scale implementation of NWRM.

3 - Implementation and funding of Programmes of Measures

The participants underlined the importance of acting further for consistency between measures to achieve the environmental objectives and the policies and practices of the agricultural sector.

At present, the preparation of the Rural Development Plans (RDP) is of paramount importance for synergy with the WFD. Indeed, these RDPs will establish a financial basis for the years to come (representing up to 20% of the total CAP budget). Indirectly, they will define the ways in which the pressures of agricultural origin will evolve during the implementation of the 2nd WFD management plans. It is therefore of prime importance to act now to take measures for the water and hydro-morphology of rivers. The participants asked the water managers to be closer to their colleagues of the agricultural sectors to: include financing measures that benefit both water and the agricultural sector but also to limit the financing of some measures that could have negative effects on the ecological quality of water bodies and thus make it even more difficult to achieve environmental objectives.

It is advisable to ensure that the 2nd and 3rd RBMPs are based on an increasingly exhaustive economic analysis of pressures and adequate quantification of costs and impacts of the measures needed to comply with the objectives of the WFD. For this purpose, it is necessary to establish clear and transparent methodologies, improve common knowledge, but also, if needed, to agree on a practical guide under the CIS to complete and update the WATECO guidance document.

+ Commentaires sur la décision de justice de la Cour Européenne sur la définition des services (case against Germany) ?? YP : Après le prochain SCG.

4 - Water governance in Transboundary Basins: WFD International Districts; Role and means of International Commissions; Bi and Multilateral Agreements and Conventions

Paragraphe sur entry into force of the UN Watercourse conventions in 2014 ?

5 – Collaborative data management for knowledge development

"Knowledge is a prerequisite to action". Whether at the transboundary, national or basin district scale, good knowledge and easy access to data and information on the status and evolution of water resources and of their use is a key to a successful water policy.

The managers of water resources need regular access to reliable, updated and relevant data and information, to fulfil their missions of operational management, regulation, planning, risk management, public information...

Local authorities, representatives of the different categories of users and associations for environmental protection or working for the public interest, as well as relevant governmental departments should also have access to such information and data to enable their participation in the IWRM-related decision-making process.

Unfortunately, the necessary data are often fragmented/incomplete/dispersed and heterogeneous, and when they do exist, their access is often difficult to organize due to a lack of interoperability between existing information systems: lack of agreements and organizational difficulties for data sharing between institutions, problems of comparability of the data sets made available (semantic interoperability), lack of procedures to facilitate the automatic exchange of data between existing information systems (technical interoperability).

In 2013, field practitioners, decision-makers and members of the EUROPE-INBO group, gathered in a workshop to share best practices for monitoring programmes, particularly insisted on the value of developing tools for data interpretation to better communicate with decision-makers and the general public.

Thus, in addition to enhancement activities carried out at European level under the WISE and SEIS systems, participants in EUROPE-INBO 2014 recommended increasing the exchange of experience on the ways of producing and sharing comparable data among stakeholders at the national level, as well as on the tools and methods used for the analysis and interpretation of data and the dissemination of knowledge to decision makers and the general public.

6 - Floods

The Flood Directive requires the drafting of Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) for each area identified as of Potentially Significant Flood Risk (PSFR). The FRMP must be coordinated in each basin.

The Flood Management Plan must:

- develop appropriate goals for flood risk management in the areas covered by the plan; objectives should focus on reducing the negative impacts of floods on human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity;
- include measures to achieve the identified objectives; the recommendation is to focus, where appropriate, on reducing flood probability and/or on using non-structural measures, including flood awareness and flood forecasting;
- take into account all aspects of flood risk management, with a focus on prevention, protection and preparedness, taking account of the specific characteristics of the river or sub-basin;
- be subject to public consultation and actively encourage the involvement of stakeholders;
- be coordinated and synchronized with the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).

The main components of a Flood Risk Management Plan are as follows:

- Conclusion of the preliminary flood risk assessment;
- Flood-prone area maps and flood risk maps;
- Description of objectives;
- Summary of measures and prioritization;
- Description of the cost-benefit methodology, when available, used in a transnational context;
- Description of how the implementation process will be managed;
- Summary of public information and consultation;

- List of competent authorities;
- Description of the coordination process with the WFD.

7 - Participation: Better inform the public and decision-makers

The participants reminded that the involvement of stakeholders and the public is critical to improve water resources management and their information and participation in decision-making from the start of the processes should be further developed. Appropriation by all users of water policies and of the resulting measures are essential to advance and increase efficiency.

For this purpose, access to monitoring results and knowledge of water and aquatic environments should be facilitated to a wider public. In the case of public participation, these elements are essential to increase the understanding of the challenges ahead and of the efforts needed.

If the efforts, undertaken by Member States for the first WFD cycle, mainly focused on meeting WFD obligations (especially in characterization of water bodies) now, emphasis should be placed on the exploitation and sound use of the produced data, and on their wide dissemination to and appropriation by decision-makers and the general public.

Indeed, current practices are often based on the results from monitoring systems provided to local stakeholders and the public by government services or agencies at the basin level. This dissemination may take place through public meetings, information brochures and/or websites. For each monitoring site, the results are usually provided annually or every two years. The results of the assessment of the status of water bodies are in turn usually released every three years.

Beyond these practices, the development of interpretation tools, leading to better communication with decision-makers and the public, also requires some thinking. The monitoring programme could be a communication tool in itself if based on standardized methods improving the understanding, comparison and use of information. In this regard, there is a demand for management charts combining indicators on the status, pressures and responses at the level of sub-basins. These elements could, for example, be downloaded from dedicated websites after geographical selection.

The participants also stressed that the indicators used to characterize the status of water bodies are too general to change on an annual basis. They do not reflect the effectiveness of the actions undertaken during the WFD cycle (6 years). There is also a real need for less aggregated indicators that could be used effectively at local and national level. Such "sub-indicators" would allow elected representatives and the public to better understand the results of the significant efforts made under the WFD. Some progress is expected through new biological and trend indicators.

Finally, the monitoring strategy should be adjustable over time to take account of new technologies, in particular to become (or remain) the most effective regarding WFD requirements.

The "EUROPE - INBO 2014" conference is a new important step not only for assessing the implementation of the first cycle of River Basin Management Plans, but also for formulating sound proposals to improve WFD implementation in the next cycles, especially for the 2015-

2021 period. The recommendations are also designed to feed the preparatory work for the 7th World Water Forum, which began in May 2013.

It was also an occasion to practice a new kind of workshop in EUROPE-INBO to share experiences and make recommendations on practices to be reproduced and perpetuated.

The participants thanked Bulgaria and especially Director Nicholas KARNOLSKI for having fulfilled with determination and success the EUROPE-INBO Group presidency during the year 2013/2014.

xxx...Romania, was elected President of the EUROPE-INBO Group for the year to come, until the next conference in 2015.

Mr. Jean SCHEPMAN, President of the International Affairs Commission of the Artois Picardy Water Agency (France) keeps his role as vice-president.

The delegates gratefully accepted the proposal of the Greek Authorities to organize "EUROPE- INBO 2015" conference in Greece.

The delegates thanked the Romanian Authorities for their excellent hospitality and for the excellent organization of this 12th Conference.

APPROVED IN BUCHAREST ON 15 NOVEMBER 2014

The Final Declaration, all papers and photographs of the conference are available on the website:

www.inbo-news.org