



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

« EURO INBO 2005 »

INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE



NAMUR - WALLOON REGION (BELGIUM)
29 SEPTEMBER – 1st OCTOBER 2005

Final

FINAL RESOLUTIONS

More than 175 representatives of governmental administrations in charge of water resources management, of basin organizations or water authorities **coming from 36 countries**: Armenia, Belgium, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Luxembourg, Morocco, Moldavia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and International Commissions (Moselle-Saar, Scheldt, Meuse, Rhine), as well as representatives from South Africa, Congo, Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan, Mexico, USA, Uzbekistan, of the International Commission for the Congo, Oubangui and Sangha River Basins (CICOS), of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), of the United Nations Environment Program, the Global Water Partnership (GWP-MED), the World Water Council, the Secretariat of the 4th World Water Forum of Mexico and the European Commission, **met in Namur - Walloon Region in Belgium, from 29 September to 1st October 2005, at the invitation of Mr. Benoit LUTGEN**, Walloon Minister for Agriculture, Rural Areas and the Environment, under the auspices of the **Group of European Basin Organizations for the WFD implementation (EURO-INBO)**, of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO) and of the Central and Eastern European Network of Basin Organizations (CEENBO).

This important meeting especially fits in with the European cycle of the preparation of the 4th World Water Forum of MEXICO CITY in March 2006.

The meetings of the MENBO and CEENBO Bureaus, as well as of INBO World Liaison Bureau were held at the same time and were mainly devoted to the preparation of the 4th World Water Forum of next March in Mexico City.

PREAMBLE:

Many organizations here represented are already members of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), currently present in 58 Countries. INBO was created in 1994 in Aix-les-Bains (France) to enable the mobilization of the real and practical experience of decision-makers and professionals of the administrations and organizations concerned, directly responsible for the effective implementation of integrated water resources management at the level of river basins or wishing to implement it in their respective countries or regions (IWRM).

INBO is open to all relevant organizations that wish to become members. All are all welcomed.

In Europe, INBO relies on Regional Networks in Central and Eastern Europe (CEENBO) and in the Mediterranean (MENBO), on the Network of International Commissions and Transboundary Basins Organizations and on the « **EURO-INBO** » **Group of European Basin Organizations** for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), created in November 2003 during the Valencia meeting in Spain.

The second plenary assembly of the « EURO-INBO » Group took place in Krakow (Poland) in September 2004.

The « EURO-INBO » Group meets a need for **informal exchanges of practical experiences** between voluntary basin organizations, which encounter **many operational problems in the field implementation of the WFD and develop original approaches**, as evidenced, for instance, during the **initial characterization of the river basin districts carried out in 2004**.

The Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) organized around Working Groups led by the European Water Directors and the European Commission, allowed the production of many very interesting and useful orientation documents for a common understanding of the various aspects of the WFD; these guidance documents were also tested in about fifteen pilot basins distributed on the whole territory of the European Union and in Candidate Countries.

This tremendous work is the basis for the implementation of the Framework Directive in the entire European Union.

The work of the « EURO INBO » group aims at enriching the common strategy for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) without duplicating work already done and by also presenting different approaches, very operational results or field experiments and by identifying the very practical and pragmatic questions, which are asked by the European relevant Organizations and Authorities for the effective and more efficient implementation of the Framework Directive in their respective basins and districts.

The « EURO-INBO » group of the European basin organizations is, from now on, member of the Common Strategy Coordination Group (CIS) for the WFD implementation process, and the participants made a point of thanking the European Commission for its approval. It will thus be able to transmit information coming from Member Organizations, as well as the conclusions of this assembly of Namur.

It is a great honor for the group of European basin organizations, which will represent INBO in the CIS process.

The implementation of the European Water Framework Directive in the 25 countries of the enlarged European Union and in the Countries applying for accession, seems a major fact for the dissemination of the principles of good governance, recommended by INBO, which is indeed a priority topic for mobilizing its members, not only in Europe, but also in all the Countries which would be interested in it. It should be underlined that several non-candidate countries (Serbia-Montenegro, the Ukraine) voluntarily committed themselves to implement the WFD as the Member States do.

PROCEEDINGS:

Two main topics were dealt with during the 3rd plenary assembly of the « EURO-INBO » Group of European Basin Organizations in Namur, on 29, 30 September and 1st October 2005.

- a) The implementation of the Framework Directive in transboundary river basins and International River Basin Districts (IRBDs), with a significant participation of the European international commissions, among them those concerning the Walloon region,
- b) the participation of the populations in the definition of water policy, responsibilities of the local elected officials and of the professional and association representatives, the « basin committees », consultation of the « general public » for the implementation of the Framework Directive. This topic has widely opened the work of the assembly to our partners working in the field.

51 papers were presented during the Namur meeting.

1- Transboundary rivers and International River Basin Districts (IRBDs):

There are many transboundary basins in Europe and almost all the Countries are concerned at least partly. For some of them, all their surface or ground waters come from or go out to a nearby country, member or not of the European Union. All kinds of case do exist from mere bilateral cooperation and to the extreme situation of the Danube River basin, which involves 18 countries.

The Krakow meeting in 2004 had shown the importance of using and strengthening the existing international bodies, due to their experience regarding exchanges between riparian countries (including those which are not members or candidates to the EU) going back, for some of them, to several ten years of existence.

The WFD implementation and the work undertaken for the drawing up, in 2004, of the umbrella reports of the international districts obviously reinforced the exchange and **sharing of practices between riparian countries**.

It may also have led to modify or complement the existing **international treaties or agreements** to make them compliant with the new concepts or obligations of the WFD, such as, for example, the « good ecological status » principle, the formulation of a sole management plan for a basin, the improvement of means for the prevention and control of floods and droughts, the coordination of measures against accidental pollution, etc.

The main issues, that were discussed, dealt with the following aspects:

- Progress report of the « Characterization » of the International River Basin Districts (RBDs),
- Respective roles of the International Commissions, of their Secretariats and Member States, cases of the Federal Countries,
- Preparation of « Management Plans », processes, timetable,
- Reporting and data exchange between riparian Countries,
- Flood and drought prevention.

2- Consultation of the « general public » for the implementation of the Framework Directive: participation of the populations in the definition of water policy, role of local elected officials and of professional and association representatives, the basin committees.

Article 14 of the WFD introduces the concept of **active participation of the « interested parties » and of public consultation**.

The topic of **the participation of the « interested parties »** in the preparation of the characterization was dealt with in very diverse experiments in various basins. It is essential to continue and enrich the discussion on this topic and on **public consultation** because of their increasing significance in the planning process required by the WFD.

The main issues dealt with were:

- Contents and forms of the consultation documents,
- Processes for Public Consultation and methods used,
- Necessary budgets,
- First experiments, use of the received opinions.

FINAL RESOLUTIONS:

□ The organizations participating in the « EURO-INBO » group reaffirmed their wish to continue exchanging their experiences through four complementary activities:

- The organization of regular meetings, yearly plenary sessions or thematic workshops. Apart from an exchange of experiences, these meetings allow to effectively identify the main concerns of basin organizations involved in the practical implementation of the WFD.
- The launching of the « EURO-INBO » website, using the methodologies, techniques and contents already elaborated in the AQUADOC-INTER project (in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania) and in EMWIS, Euro-Mediterranean System for Information and Documentation in the Water Sector.

This website will allow a wider dissemination of guidelines and documents prepared within the European framework of the CIS, of work progresses on essential issues, such as, for example, the definition of the good status and intercalibration, as well as the results obtained in the Pilot River Basins (PRBs).

Usually, access to this information still remains complex for basin organizations.

It will also gather case studies of other pilot river basins and the documents produced by the European basin organizations and District Authorities, such as the « initial characterizations » carried out before the end of 2004 (abstract in English, links with the sites of basin organizations), and the other documents planned in the timetable for WFD implementation.

This site would also include a forum for discussions and frequently asked questions.

The project for developing this website for information on the WFD implementation in the basins/districts, (euro-wfd.inbo-news.org) was adopted by the delegates, who were very interested by the prototype that was presented, and wished a quick start to capitalize without any delay the volume of information and documents already produced in each river basin.

The PTS was entrusted with the search for the necessary financing, from the European Commission in particular.

- The development of twinning agreements between basin organizations of different countries facing common problems, especially within the **TWINBASIN** project.

- The promotion of training and professional capacity building programs for the executives and staffs of Basins Organizations, especially with the start of the WFD-LEARN program, whose prototype of joint distance teaching and sharing of experience has already encouraging results.

A very positive evaluation was also given to INBO/GWP Associated Program, especially of the progress made by the « TWINBASIN » and ongoing projects: « IWRM-NET », « WFD-LEARN », « Europe INBO – WFD », of the proposals made by ANBO within the European Water Facility in Africa (SADIEau-AWIS), as well as the IW-LEARN project supported by GEF (Global Environment Facility).

□ At this stage of their exchanges, the delegates were able to propose several recommendations to improve the WFD implementation at the European basin level.

A – As regards transboundary basins:

- Taking into account the results of the characterizations undertaken by each country in 2004 and the sharing leading to the umbrella report, it appears that homogenization of the methods is not compulsory, but that transparency is essential for a good common understanding of the methods used and a comparability of the obtained results, in particular regarding the risk of not achieving good status and cost recovery.
- For going further at the level of the international basins, and for starting the preparatory work of the programs of measures required by the WFD, it is essential to clarify the environmental objectives and the definition of the good status at the European level.
- It is recommended:
 - ◆ To promote a bottom-up approach, using the work done by various countries to prepare the program of measures and to formulate the management plan of an associated international district,
 - ◆ To develop exchanges on the methods used and tools, such as catalogues of measures, databases on environmental costs, etc.,
 - ◆ To conceive an iterative and dynamic approach for the formulation of the program of measures, taking the existing and future data into account without delaying the actions to be taken in the short term.

But also:

- ◆ To make the monitoring/follow-up systems coherent, harmonization of the data and Geographic Information Systems in the transboundary basins as a priority,
- ◆ To analyze the compatibility of the GIS tools developed by some commissions (Rhine, Meuse) with the WISE reporting system,
- ◆ To ensure comparability between the results of the national monitoring programs planned for 2007.

The delegates also proposed:

- To strengthen the action of the existing international bodies (international commissions, bilateral cooperation, etc.) which have already allowed profitable exchanges for the drawing up of the umbrella reports in the international districts, and to promote a clear definition of the roles and commitments of each country,
- To support the creation of new International Commissions and to strengthen cooperation for shared basins with the countries neighboring the EU (candidate countries, NIS and Balkan countries), through projects, supported by the European Commission, for the implementation of the WFD principles in these basins,
- To consider the physical problems which may result from the use of several national languages in a transboundary basin (delays and additional costs for translation, etc.).

Generally, the significance and dynamism of any very practical cooperation that has existed for a long time and that develops in transboundary basins are still not well-known and should be better enhanced and disseminated.

The Framework Directive is an opportunity for strengthening these kinds of cooperation.

B – As regards public consultation for the implementation of the Framework Directive:

- For promoting consultation it is necessary:
 - to raise the awareness and inform the general public, to explain the stakes, so that the people can give their opinion,
 - to identify more precisely the issues of interest for the general public in each local context: drinking water, water price, neighborhood issues, etc.,
 - to prepare strong arguments for raising the awareness and motivating the public, with a simple and adapted vocabulary, evidencing the positive results of achieving the good ecological status,
 - to make more room for references and cultural practices in water policy in order to interest the populations and develop a real citizen management of water.

An administrative consultation should not be taken for a « popular » consultation of the general public which also calls upon cultural bases, images, signs of recognition and very specific media.

It seems that original approaches, based on the local organization of events or on the use of local communication supports, are sometimes more effective for mobilizing the citizens than the use of the media for a wide dissemination to the general public, the cost of which is high for a return which is sometimes disappointing. The passage by the relay of local authorities and of NGOs may be very useful. It is necessary to take into account the proximity and the direct contact on the places of living.

- A preliminary stage is the consultation of the « interested parties », while making sure that they are representative, in order to produce balanced consultation documents available to « everyone ».

It is also recommended:

- To mobilize the « interested parties » as relays in the public consultation, while adapting to the administrative and cultural context of each country,
- To ensure the representativeness of the local stakeholders and of their role of « relay of opinion » to the general public,
- To strengthen and develop a tripartite dialogue (local elected officials, users and public utilities) which is a fundamental basis for integrated, balanced and sustainable management,
- To rely, as much as possible, on participative bodies already existing in the various Member States (river committee, local water commission) and on the local processes of water management (river contracts, etc.) which are the ideal support to develop the participation of the public on its territory,
- In relation with the main issues arising in the district, to continue the consultation on the stakes and problems for each sub-basin through a « short channel », for a greater involvement of the public and a better appropriation of the process.

This requires the preparation of suited documents.

Generally, it appears that the consultation and the involvement of the general public in the implementation of water policies will require the use of specialists in communication and public enquiries in order to tend to maximum effectiveness and better participative interactivity, to define the most suitable methods, most of which still remaining to be tested.

In particular, it is necessary to adopt a language adapted to the targeted publics while avoiding too technical or bureaucratic terms which would be inaccessible to the greatest number of citizens. The language should be clear, simple, understandable by everyone with strong and recognizable visual documents.

Attention was also paid to the cost of these consultations and to the need for planning significant budgets to conform to the new obligations in this field.

The delegates then proposed:

- To promote exchanges between European basins on this topic, in order to allow the sharing of experiences on consultation methods and means and on the processing of the received opinions,
- To create a working group in order to produce and disseminate to the « EURO-INBO » members a « practical guide for consultation » including:
 - a list of the types of communication tools and of partnerships accompanied by an evaluation of the advantages and limits of each one,
 - the sharing of experiences on the methods used for the processing, analysis and synthesis of the received opinions,
 - a list of useful « recipes » and errors to be avoided (e.g. the choice of dates, processes, strategy, etc.).

The main meeting of 2007 should not be missed!

C – Other recommendations for the implementation of the Framework Directive:

➤ The WFD and agriculture:

- Better identifying the areas in which agricultural pressures have a significant impact on water quality and prioritizing the means necessary for restoring the quality in these areas,
- Promoting the sharing of experiences on examples of efficient agro-environmental measures (establishment of buffer zones, reasoning on inputs, conversion of irrigated crops into less water-consuming crops, etc.) while targeting on cases where farmers' associations have initiated and carried out actions,
- Assisting the farmers to promote the use of waste for producing energy,
- Mobilizing joint financing for these priority zones/measures, and in particular considering financial compensations for the farmers who changed their behavior,
- Ensuring prior compatibility between the CAP and the environmental directives.

➤ Other recommendations:

- As concerns floods, underlining the « upstream-downstream » common cause as the basis for consistent management on the scale of river and sub-basins,
- Ensuring consistency between the monitoring of the substances controlled in raw water, for implementing the Directive on « drinking water », prioritizing water supply from surface water and the substances targeted by the Framework Directive,

- Taking into account all the aspects of water management and their impacts, and not only the problems of quality of water and the environments, as everything is linked in each water body,
- Better considering a continuum between surface water and groundwater, especially regarding non-point pollution and contaminated soils and sites,
- Underlining the importance of having interfaces between the Framework Directive and navigation, energy production, the prevention and protection against floods and droughts,
- Taking into account the quantitative problems, and obviously the issues related to droughts and floods,
- Ensuring the continuity of rivers to restore or guarantee the upcoming and circulation of fish species,
- Introducing reflexions and prospects on climate change,
- Guiding the various stakeholders towards the use of ecological sanitation and alternative methods for water treatment,
- Acting towards the persons in charge in the Member States so that they take measures, in their field of competence, for monitoring the invading aquatic species, assessing the threats which they represent, informing of the risks of propagation between basins, providing the resources necessary to prevent the introduction and proliferation of these species in shared transboundary waters,
- Developing international and standardized methods for the early tracking of the invading aquatic species and standardized processes for fighting against these species,
- Developing sub-basin plans and programs of measures to be implemented at local level by mobilizing participative bodies either already existing or to be created (these sub-basin plans will be consistent with the main trends of the District plan).

It is also essential:

- To strengthen the cooperation programs with the neighboring countries of the enlarged European Union, in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans, and within the neighborhood policy in the Mediterranean and in the Caucasus,
- To develop collaboration between universities and research institutes.

The delegates also underlined several other problems, interesting and significant for future exchanges of experiences:

- Special implementation of the WFD in the islands.

The Namur assembly was aware of the specificities of islands which imply a particular approach to water management and to the WFD implementation.

INBO will give its support so that the case of the islands is presented at the World Water Forum of Mexico City, especially the threats facing some islands because of risks related to the possible climate change.

The creation of a specialized network of « basin islands » will be proposed during a next meeting of INBO World Liaison Bureau.

- The treatment of historical pollution and its impact on the resource and the environments (polluted sites and soils, mine subsidence, sediments, etc.) and, in particular, water management in the areas of past or current mining activities,
- A thinking about the institutional organizations that can be accepted by district Authorities according to their specific constraints, for favoring better convergence for the effective implementation of the WFD,
- Compatibility between the WFD and flood control in heavily affected zones, but also optimization in the slightly urbanized areas (aquifer recharge, use of the potential self purification process of infiltrations, protection of the spawning grounds for pikes, etc.),
- The effects of the classification of water bodies and of the designation of protected areas on future planning and developments,
- A new way of considering the use of water: an invaluable good which must be preserved.

Generally, the participants considered very favorably the exchanges, which allowed a better understanding of the WFD and of its instruments on the one hand, and, on the other, the significant progress already made in the first stage of its implementation, the initial characterization of districts, which was completed at the end of 2004.

The participants thanked the European Commission for its participation in this assembly of the « EURO-INBO » group. The « EURO-INBO » group reminds that the European Commission is permanently invited to its meetings and work.

The meeting also allowed to plan the participation of the European basin organizations in the 4th Water Forum of MEXICO CITY, on the topic of integrated water resources management (IWRM), and, of course, of the implementation of the Framework Directive in what concern them.

In a general manner, for these ten last years, the implementation of the principles of integrated water resources management at the level of basins, on which is based INBO action, has very largely progressed, in particular with the European Framework Directive, and it is thus very important to disseminate our results to inform on all the advantages and to propose new bases for cooperation.

It is the reason why the members of the « EURO-INBO » group hope that the next World Water Forum of Mexico City will be the occasion of reaffirming the obvious interest of integrated basin management and requested the possibility of presenting their results, which are now indisputable and visible in the field.

INBO wished to actively contribute to the 4th World Water Forum of Mexico City, from 16 to 22 March 2006. It wishes to get involved in the organization of a partnership and in the process for preparing the sessions regarding the topic of integrated water resources management at the level of basins.

It hopes to have sufficient time to present as many local actions as possible, which have been successfully developed by basin organizations throughout the world.

INBO has proposed to the Mexican Authorities and to the World Water Council to organize three sessions:

- 1. on the participation of the public and water users in basin management, in partnership with UNESCO, JWF, Green Cross International, the International Secretariat of Water and other organizations which would be interested,**
- 2. on the management of transboundary basins (directed by ANBO),**
as well as:
- 3. on the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive, which is an exceptional example of the implementation of basin management in more than 27 countries, either members of or candidates for accession to the European Union (directed by « EURO-INBO »).**

In order to prepare these sessions and to mobilize its members, INBO plans to organize, in addition to the conference of Marrakech (Morocco), held in May 2005, for the Mediterranean basin, and to this 3rd Assembly of the Group of European basin organizations for the implementation of the Framework Directive, two other large regional preparatory meetings in 2005:

- a) in November in Niamey (Niger) for an Extraordinary Assembly of the African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO),
- b) In liaison with the Council of Europe, the International Secretariat of Water and Solidarity Water Europe, in the week devoted to the citizens' approach to water management, in Strasbourg (France), from 17 to 21 October 2005.

In addition, INBO already participated in the International Conference on Water in Central Asia on 30 and 31 May 2005 in Dushanbe (Tajikistan).

CEENBO also organizes a workshop in Wroclaw (Poland) on 19 and 20 October 2005 on flood prevention and actively participates in the workshop in Sterdyn (Poland) on 18 and 19 October on the UNECE convention.

Contacts are under way with our Japanese colleagues for the consolidation of the Asian Network of Basin Organizations (NARBO).

All the members and permanent observers of the Network will get mobilized for the 4th World Water Forum of Mexico City.

The participants ask the Secretariat of the 4th World Water Forum, the Mexican Authorities and the World Water Council, to favorably examine their candidature for the organization of the sessions proposed in Mexico City and that an agreement be quickly given in order to ensure success by a strong internal and external mobilization of the Network.

The delegates thanked the Ministry of the Walloon Region in Belgium for having initiated this first meeting and for their perfect organization and their very warm welcome in Namur.

Mr. Jean Marie WAUTHIER, engineer, Director of international relations in the environment sector at the Ministry of the Walloon Region, will chair the « EURO INBO » group until its next plenary assembly in 2006.

The delegates cordially congratulated **Mr. M. OSTOJSKI**, Water Director of Poland, for the effectiveness with which he held the Presidency of the « EURO INBO » Group in 2004/2005 and for the significant progress made in the structuring and the extension of the partnership through the whole European Union and neighboring Countries.

The delegates retained with thanks the proposal from the French basin organizations to organize **the next plenary meeting of « EURO INBO » in Megève in Upper Savoy from 20 to 22 September 2006** on the occasion of the next international conference on « water in mountains: protection and development of the upper river basins ».

All the working documents of the meeting, as well as the papers, are available on the website : www.inbo-news.org.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED IN NAMUR ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2005.