# 21ST INTERNATIONAL EURO-INBO CONFERENCE
# 12TH MEMBO GENERAL ASSEMBLY
# 20TH EURO-INBO ANNIVERSARY

16-19 OCTOBER 2023, VALENCIA - SPAIN

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO
EURO INBO
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
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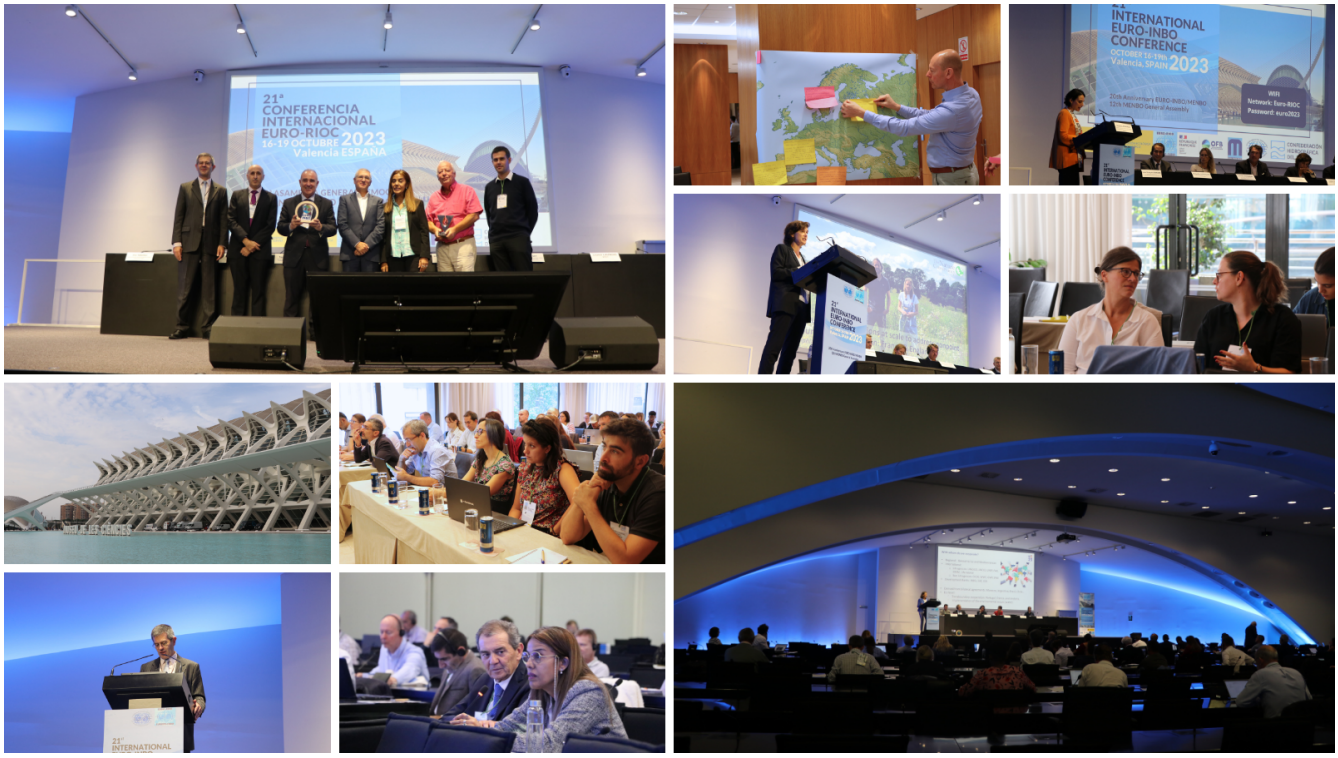
REMOC REMOB MEMBO
INBO
CONFEDERACIÓN HIDROGRÁFICA DEL JÚCAR



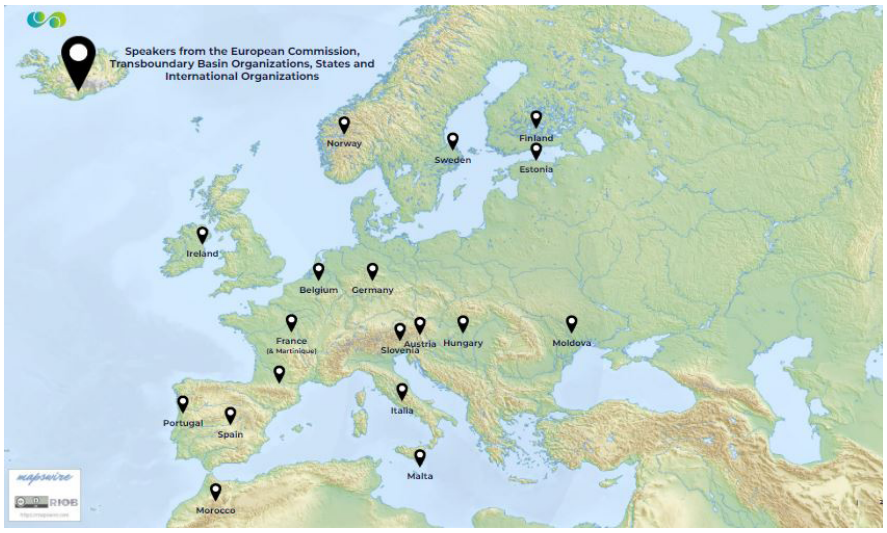

**5**
**THEMATIC SESSIONS**

**2**
**INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS**

**3**
**CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL VISITS**

**150**
**ONSITE PARTICIPANTS FROM 24 COUNTRIES**

**62**
**SPEAKERS AND RAPPORTEURS FROM 20 COUNTRIES**




*Speakers from 20 countries*

# CURRENT EU POLICIES ON BASIN MANAGEMENT AND THEIR EVOLUTION

The European context was presented by Ms. Veronica Manfredi, Director "Zero Pollution" at the European Commission's Directorate General for the Environment (DG ENV), and commented on by high level representatives from Austria, France and Spain.

## European context and issues

Water pollution and structural mismanagement are exacerbated by climate change and increasing extreme events such as floods and droughts. There is still a lot to do to fully achieve good ecological status and good quantitative status of water bodies, the objectives set in theWater Framework Directive.
The pursuit of these goals will lead to a restoration of our ecosystems and a transformation of our relationship with water.

As for Austria, a country of Central Europe, it may be very rich in water resources, especially on groundwater, but it is also facing extreme events and new challenges such as micropollution.
In the past, water scarcity used to be more of a southern problem, but now it is a problem for all EU citizens.

"

**Ms. Veronica Manfredi, Director «Zero Pollution» (ENV.C) of the Directorate General for the Environment (DG ENV), European Commission**

"Management at basin level is crucial because it enables us to have an integrated approach that looks at all the different uses of water within a well-defined area. This is the way to enable the various stakeholders to be brought together each time a new hydrographical management plan is drawn up for a given basin. It is this form of inclusive governance that has at least prevented any further deterioration in water conditions to date, within the boundaries of the European Union, but it does not prevent major obstacles from persisting."

"

**Mr. Günter Liebel, Secretary General, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, Austria**

"We have to move away from the silos thinking. Better integration and interlinkages between sectors is a need, for instance between agriculture and water."

## European priorities

- Becoming water resilient by 2050,
- Adopting a strategic approach for EU security (a high priority of the EU Green deal),
- Renewing and developing new legislations (for instance: endorsing the reviewed Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive).

## How to achieve collective resilient solutions?

### At the European level:

- **Consuming less water:** the priority should be reducing water demand, promoting water efficiency and protecting water resources before increasing supply,
- **Joint management of water quantity and quality** (tackle pollution at source, to avoid quantitative problems),
- Fully apply cost-recovery and **polluter-pays & user-pays principles**,
- Importance of **boosting water reuse.**

**Through national action plans:**

- Promoting **sobriety** for all actors, optimizing resource availability, preserving water quality and raising **public awareness**,
- Relying on **concerted and operational water management governance**,
- Ensuring **adequate pricing**, and **investing in research and development and water services** (sanitation and wastewater treatment) and in highly qualified human capital,
- **Drinking water safety plan**: legal guidance to partners and authorities,
- Increasing the use of **non-conventional resources** such as water reuse,
- Reaching for **river restoration** targets,
- Improving and upgrading **policy tools** to new challenges.

*Ms. Marie-Laure Métayer, Deputy Director of Water and Biodiversity, during the opening panel on current EU policies related to basin management and their developments.*

## Focus on water governance in Spain

An **extremely irregular hydrological regime** with a very **fragile balance between resources, demands and environmental needs** aggravated by climate change. The large number of existing dams in Spain and their high average ages requires efforts for maintenance and rehabilitation, keeping them in good operating condition and safety.

**10% of the treated wastewater** (400 $Hm^3$/year) is **reused**, and 500 $Hm^3$/year come from **desalination plants**. **Management plans** for river basins, flood risk, drought, river restoration and groundwater are the main instruments to develop water policies.

**9 hydrographic confederations** (first created in 1926) to ensure the management of the hydraulic and police public domain, control networks, hydraulic works and the hydrological planning.

**Find out more**

- Water Framework Directive - Setting out rules to halt deterioration in the status of EU water bodies and achieve good status for Europe's rivers, lakes and groundwater.
- EU Green Deal - Striving to be the first climate-neutral continent.
- Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive - Ensuring that urban wastewater is properly dealt with to protect the environment and human health.
- France Water plan 2023 - 2030 / In the Water Action Agenda - For a resilient and concerted management of water resources, promoting water savings.
- Nitrates Directive - Protecting waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.

# WATER AND AGRICULTURE: MANAGEMENT OF NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION

Non-point source pollution from agriculture is a challenge for the good status of water bodies, for which the improvement of agricultural practices through farmers' training and awareness-rasing, with counseling and guidance services together with good control and data will help finding the specific, context-relevant and cost-effective measures, that will contribute to the improvement of the quality of water bodies.

## Whose experiences were shared?

Spanish (Guadalquivir Hydrographic Confederation and National Federation of Irrigation Communities), Estonian (Ministry of Climate), Hungarian (Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency), and multi-country experiences (the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza - IAMZ & The Nature Conservancy) were shared on water pollution in relation to agriculture.

**Mr. Juan Valero de Palma, President, National Federation of Irrigation Communities of Spain (FENACORE)**

"Nobody pollutes voluntarily. If this happens, it is due to other reasons, such as inertia, habits, tradition… one of the first measures should be to work in capacity-building and awareness raising on the consequences of excessive fertilizer use."

Non-point source pollution from agriculture is a challenge for the good status of water bodies. In the future, the followings will have to be improved:

- **knowledge of data and its evolution**: it is necessary to identify water bodies, the evolution of their status and impact and to know the amount of nitrate and sulfate,

Hungary's experience with lake pollution management led to the conclusion that continuous data is needed to be able to evaluate the effect of the actions taken and better understand the problems.

- control of water use, and
- identification of the **social impacts** that water use produces on human health.

## Focus on diffuse agricultural pollution challenges and WFD achievement in Estonia

68% of water bodies are in poor condition as a result of diffuse pollution. Agricultural activity causes **high concentrations of nutrients in groundwater** and this affects the quality of surface water. To mitigate these effects, sustainable agricultural activities must be implemented, but also specific measures that will be profitable in specific situations. For example, floating platforms can capture nutrients and bioreactors with wood chips. Moreover, nutrient leaching occurs mainly in winter, the solution to mitigate this effect is to establish a cover in winter.

In current regulations, action programs include measures conditioning agricultural activity, keeping in mind the environmental quality objectives included in the hydrological plans.

To ensure the sustainability of irrigated agriculture, to make compatible the uses demanded by society while maintaining environmental quality, it is essential:

- **to develop and implement conditional measures** that encourage the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices,
- **to identify the origin of diffuse pollution**: sometimes irrigated agriculture is seen as the only responsible party when the cause may lie in other sectors such as urban, industrial and livestock exploitation, and
- **to better coordinate** the public administrations involved in water management activities.

More specifically, **to reduce nonpoint pollution by nitrates and phytosanitary products, water quality controls are important** to establish greater effectiveness of phytosanitary products. Irrigation modernization requires both **public and private effort.** Irrigator communities can help through **training**, awareness and environmental education to reduce fertilizer use to what crops need. The role of farmers is fundamental. **Nature-based Solutions** (NbS) can be used to address the problem of diffuse pollution after identifying areas where this type of solutions can set a trend and attract investment in infrastructure. NbS generate multiple benefits, such as those related to mitigation, climate change, social issues and health.

**Find out more**

- Estonian project LIFE IP CleanEST - Reducing the negative impact of nutrient-rich groundwater on surface water bodies.
- Spanish Royal Decree 47/2022 - On the protection of waters against diffuse pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.
- Wendling Beck - A flagship project transforming farmland management in Norfolk

# NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE IN RELATION WITH OTHER EUROPEAN WATER DIRECTIVES

The effective implementation of the Water Framework Directive requires an integrated and multifaceted approach: addressing challenges like ecological status, upstream activities, emerging pollutants, climate change, and transboundary resources necessitates tailored solutions, improved monitoring, and holistic strategies that incorporate horizontal integration of policies and management practices, local adaptation to protect and manage water resources effectively across Europe.

## Whose experiences were shared?

German (Federal Environment Agency), Estonian (Ministry of Climate), Finnish ELY-Economic Development, Transport and Environment Centre, Spanish (Júcar Hydrographic Confederation), Portuguese (Portuguese Environment Agency), France from overseas (Martinique Water Office), multi-country experiences (European Center for River Restoration) were shared on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in relation to other European water directives as well as other sectoral policies.

**Mr. Bart Fokkens, Associate Expert, European Center for River Restoration (ECRR)**

"We should pay more attention to the natural functioning of rivers. That should be the reference for rivers to be restored."

Current common national and transboundary problems faced by several European countries are in relation to:

- **the ecological status**: Many European countries, including Germany, Spain and Portugal, face challenges in achieving good ecological status for their water bodies based on the criteria for the WFD. Among these challenges: flow regulation, hydromorphological changes, and diffuse pollution.
- **upstream activities**: the exploitation of natural resources, like forests, peatlands and drainage, pose significant challenges by affecting water quality, erosion and sediment discharges.

- **new pollutants**: from both diffuse and point sources, in particular from wastewater treatment plans and farming, as well as higher concentration due to recurring droughts are complicating water quality management.
- **the impacts of climate change**: with mostly negative effects on the availability of water resources in quantity and quality.
- **dependency on external resources**: some regions, like Portugal, rely on external sources for a substantial portion of their water resources, leaving them vulnerable to supply disruptions.
- **fragmented river ecosystems**: river restoration efforts were hindered by insufficient attention to key ecological and hydro-morphological processes. Lack of clear restoration goals, inadequate funding, and monitoring further hampered progress.

Overall, the effective implementation of the Water Framework Directive requires an **integrated water resources management and multifaceted and holistic approach** to address all these challenges. This involves combining strategies to comply with various directives (WFD, groundwater, drinking water, nitrate, …) or creating a comprehensive national water strategy to tackle issues beyond the water sector such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. More specific solutions exist, like:

- **giving enough priority to smaller-scale interventions** in river basin management plans and programmes of measures with transparent decision-making and encouraging local actions with incentives.
- **expanding the monitoring and assessment of water bodies**: developing nuanced assessment methodologies and evaluating current and future water availability and demand to plan suitable measures for water quality improvements.
- **improving river restoration efforts** thanks to national restoration plans, inventorying river fragmentation, and barriers, setting clear goals, and securing sufficient funding. Policies should focus on hydromorphological processes, water flows, sediment transport, and climate adaptation.
- recognizing the unique challenges in different regions and countries and the need for **tailored approaches** and the development of local expertise and guidance.


*Ms. Marta Mañá Bonfill, Head of Water Quality at the Júcar Hydrographic Confederation, during her speech for the panel on the New challenges for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in relation with other European water directives.*

**Find out more**

- Biodiversity strategy for 2030 - A comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems, aiming to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, and contains specific actions and commitments.
- Nature restoration law - The proposal aims to restore ecosystems, habitats and species across the EU's land and sea areas.
- A European National River Continuity Restoration Policies Review - European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR) & STOWA.
- INTERREG Caribbean program - The Caribbean cooperation for wastewater treatment inspired by natural heritage.
- German National Water Strategy

# ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE: INTEGRATING REUSE TO COPE WITH DROUGHTS AND WATER SCARCITY

A holistic and proactive approach that focuses on wastewater reuse is essential to meet the challenges of water scarcity and climate change, while taking into account its acceptability to users by adding additional controls to prevent pollution or contamination and controlling costs.

## Whose experiences were shared?

Spanish (Júcar Hydrographic Confederation, Guadalquivir Hydrographic Confederation), French (Adour-Garonne Water Agency), Belgian (Environment Agency of Flanders), Maltese (Energy and Water Agency), Italian (Po Basin District Authority), Irish (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and multi-country (European Commission) experiences were shared on how to adapt to climate change and extreme events such as droughts and water scarcity using reused water.

**Mr. Marc García Manzana, Commissioner, Júcar Hydrographic Confederation (CHJ), Spain, Secretary General of the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME) & Mr. Guillaume Choisy, Director General, Adour-Garonne Water Agency (AEAG), France**

"Twinings between basin organisations are key to boost faster progress."

**Mr. Michael Schembri, Director of Water Policy, Energy and Water Agency (EWA), Malta**

"Water reuse should be integrated as early as possible in the water management scheme."

There is growing concern about the increasingly frequent situations of water stress and the introduction of wastewater reuse, although with varying degrees of application, highlighting its importance in the southernmost countries. A holistic and proactive approach is needed to tackle the challenges of water scarcity, droughts and climate change in general, with an emphasis on wastewater reuse as a crucial part of the solution. However, reusing wastewater also comes with challenges associated with the implementation of European regulations.

| Territory | Reused water ($m^3$/per year) | % of reused water over water demand |
|---|---|---|
| **Po basin, Italy** | 170 500 549 (over 20 $Bm^3$/year water demand) | **0,85%** |
| **Malta** | 775 200 (over 0,065 $Bm^3$/year water demand) | **1,19%** |
| **Guadalquivir basin, Spain** | 35 000 000 (over 3,72 $Bm^3$/year water demand) | **0,94%** |

Several countries underline the need for **appropriate and targeted measures** to address water management challenges, be they water stress, increased drought or climate change-related shocks. Policies and initiatives should incorporate **innovative approaches**, such as wastewater reuse, to ensure sustainable and efficient management of water resources.

However, this solution must take into account:

- Its acceptability to users

A key element is to gain the confidence of the users of the reused water and the consumers of the agricultural products generated. Training in this area is also essential and the usefulness of setting up networks for the exchange of experiences between technicians, administrations and users has been demonstrated.

- Sound regulations and controls from health authorities reconciling contamination prevention and development of reuse

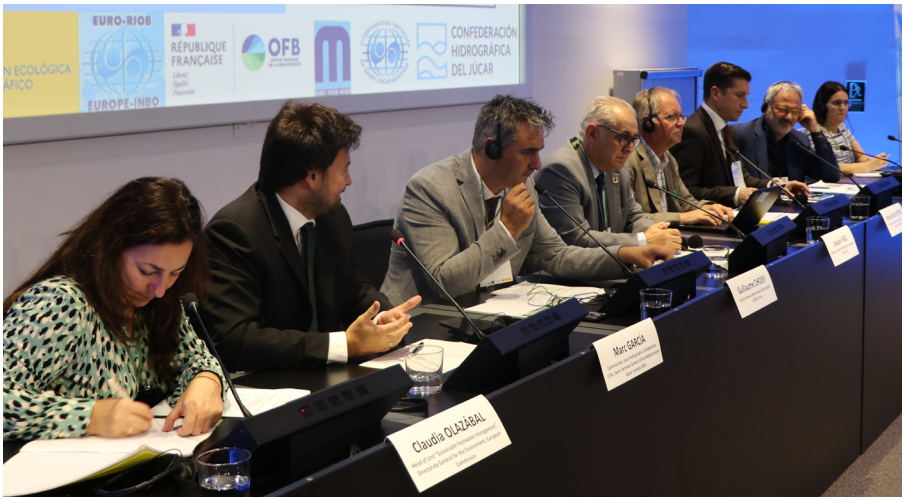
The operational incorporation of health authorities in the legal management of reuse is a challenge, an essential issue in the implementation of the recent EU Regulation 2020/741 which makes it compulsory to carry out Risk Management Plans for Reclaimed Water.

- The costs that additional controls may generate, while maintaining stable prices

The location of the water treatment plants and potential users is important, as the energy cost of the possible elevation required significantly affects the operating cost of such reuse and therefore the price and acceptance of future users.

Reuse of reclaimed wastewater is an important tool of the circular economy to address the worrying scenarios of climate change and increasing droughts in most European countries. But this is not a silver bullet: in order to be effective, this reuse needs to fit into an integrated water resources management that includes **water saving, user awareness measures and Nature-based Solutions**.

As pointed out by the case study of the Irish Department in charge of water management, NbS are valuable no-regret measures for adaptation to climate change, because they allow for increased water storage in soil and aquifers, limiting the impacts of floods and droughts. In this field, the collaboration of municipal technicians and its application in the rural world is important.




*From left to right: Ms. Claudia Olazábal (European Commission), Mr. Marc García Manzana (CHJ, Spain), Mr. Guillaume Choisy (Adour-Garonne Water Agency, France), Mr. Joaquín Páez Landa (Guadalquivir Hydrographic Confederation, Spain), Mr. Bernard De Potter, (Environment Agency of Flanders, Belgium), Mr. Michael Schembri (Energy and Water Agency, Malta), Mr. Alessandro Bratti (Po Basin District Authority, Italy), Ms. Averil Gannon (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Ireland).*

**Find out more**

- Regulation (EU) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020 - On minimum requirements for water reuse
- Waterkracht collaboration in Belgium - Between Aquafin, Ekopak, EPICo², and water-link that aims to repurpose the treated wastewater from Antwerp households into cooling water for companies in the Port of Antwerp by 2025.
- F2AGRI - Circular Flanders, Belgium - Reuse of industrial effluent for irrigation in agriculture

# THE ROLE OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE (WFD)

The need for enhanced public participation, clear regulations, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in water management across different regions to better implement the Water Framework Directive taking into account every stakeholder is essential. Innovative solutions and strategies are a shift towards a more integrated and participatory model of water management.

## Whose experiences were shared?

Finnish (Finnish Environment Institute), French (National Water Committee, National federation of industries -FENARIVE), Belgian (Walloon Public Service), Norway (National Environment Agency), Italian (Po Basin District Authority) and Armenian (Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure) experiences were shared on the stakeholders roles in implementing the WFD.

> **Ms. Suvi Sojamo, Leading researcher, Finnish Environment Institute (Syke)**
>
> "There are no blueprints, but a range of validated good practice governance models are emerging from researched practice. [...] We must move from a model of public consultation and participation to a model of partnership and collaboration in implementing the goals."

Public participation is no easy task, and the Water Framework Directive sets very high standards.

**Issue #1: Disconnection between public involvement in river basin management and water-related challenges**

> **Mr. Anders Iversen, National Water Coordinator, National Environment Agency, Norway**
>
> "Local support is key to good river basin management plans, allowing the use of local and experience-based knowledge and the development of measures adapted to the local context. Local "ownership" in municipalities and the population gives credibility to the plans and facilitates their implementation."

Europe has significant issues in water management, with a noticeable disconnection between public involvement in river basin management and the water-related challenges. This gap complicates effective water management and leaves critical issues unaddressed. Traditional methods of public engagement, such as meetings and discussions, fall short in addressing the broader goals of water safety, fairness, and climate resilience.

In response to these challenges, innovative projects and strategies are (or should be) implemented. Among these, the GOVAQUA project stood out, advocating for legal reforms, participatory strategies, digital solutions, and economic instruments to enhance water governance. The "Living Labs" project, where stakeholders and researchers collaboratively explore water governance ways for innovation, is an example of a particularly promising approach. These labs represent a shift towards active collaboration among all stakeholders, emphasizing the need for adaptive, flexible strategies tailored to each river basin's unique conditions.

**Issue #2: Industrial sector's compliance with the Water Framework Directive**

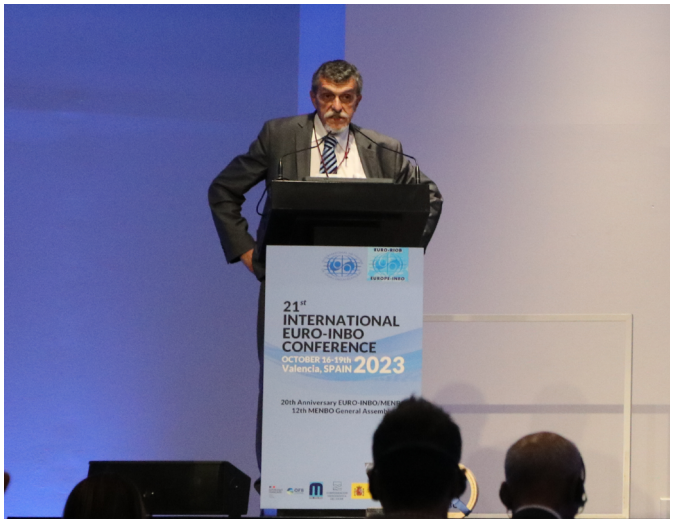
The ambiguity in the definition of "good status" for water bodies and the challenges industries face in understanding the specific impacts of their emissions can make the industrial sector's compliance with the Water Framework Directive difficult.
To address this, industries are encouraged to undertake self-monitoring of water sources and integrate environmentally friendly practices.

**Issue #3: States experience on water management and the Water Framework Directive**

**Belgium's** water management scenario presented its own set of challenges in harmonizing efforts to meet WFD standards. Despite established structures for public engagement and stakeholder collaboration, the actual level of effective public participation is low. A solution could be enhancing collaborative structures, such as "Contrats de rivière" (river contracts) and regular evaluations, to foster a unified approach to water management. Improved communication channels, especially within the agricultural sector, were also seen as crucial for aligning various interests with environmental directives.

**Norway**'s approach to water management has been the establishment of a catchment-based (bottom-up) approach, with local water boards and dedicated coordinators securing the involvement of municipalities and stakeholders, and enhancing public participation. However, the issue of sustainable funding and job security for the catchment coordinators remain a critical challenge. The OECD Principles are a useful reference for systematic evaluation and improvement of Water Governance in Norway.

In **Armenia**, the river basin management planning process encounters several obstacles, including a disconnect between legislation and practical public involvement. To tackle these issues, the session recommended more streamlined functions for the Water Committee, bolstered by international collaborations and enforced legislative requirements for public participation. The need for continuous public involvement, beyond the planning stage, was emphasized, along with the integration of successful practices from both local and EU contexts.




"*Mr. Christian Lecussan (Chairman of FENARIVE, Vice-Chairman of the Seine-Normandy Basin Committee, France) presents the industrialists' point of view.*"

**Find out more**

- EU4Environment Water and Data - Supporting a more sustainable use of water resources and improving the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens in the Eastern Partner Countries.
- Videos of the Tajo Hydrogafic Confederation, Spain - Display of restauration, irrigation, sanitation projects.
- Industrial Water Users - FENARIVE
- Governance innovations for a transition to sustainable and equitable water use in Europe GOVAQUA - Cluster of three research and innovation projects funded under the Horizon Europe programme by the European Commission
- National Water Management and Restoration Network, Finland - National forum for citizens, communities, businesses and authorities interested in the status of lakes and rivers and keen to restore them. Helps to find solutions and works together to ensure that lakes and rivers can thrive.
- The OECD Principles on Water Governance - Provides 12 must-do's for governments to design and implement effective, efficient, and inclusive water policies. To date, they have been endorsed by 170+ stakeholder groups or governments.

# TRANSBOUNDARY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Very tangible progresses are being made in Europe for transboundary cooperation through governance mechanisms, international cooperation efforts putting riparian practitioners at the heart of the development, data sharing and development of river basin management framework. International cooperation has to cover all administrative levels (political, ministerial, local).

## Whose experiences were shared?

Hungarian (Directorate General of Water Management), Spanish (Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge), Moldovan (Dniester River Basin District Committee), and multi-country (European Commission, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) experiences were shared on international cooperation.

**Ms. Francesca Bernardini - Chief, Transboundary Cooperation Section Environment Division United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**

"In Europe, there is the highest number, compared to all other continents, of transboundary water. There are 150 transboundary basins, and about 40% of the pan-European region is in transboundary basins. A high number of European countries highly depend on transboundary water from their neighbors, receiving above 50%, even 70% of water. So transboundary water cooperation is very important for countries in the region, and the water convention has been the basis for the development of cooperation, historically. [...] The UN Water Convention have enhanced progresses in transboundary water management in Europe, but financing transboundary basin organizations remains a challenge."

## Different scales of international cooperation and agreements:

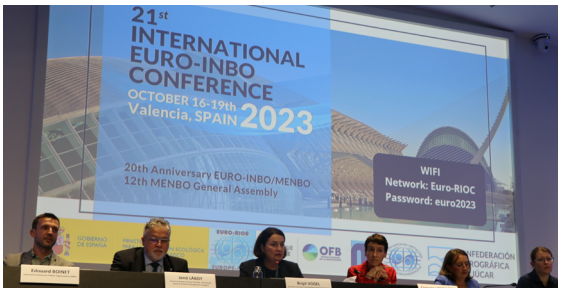
- bilateral, between neighboring countries or not, expressed through Memorandum of Understanding, agreements…
- multilateral with the elaboration of international conventions,
- regional,
- at the European level, with a common legislation or action plans,
- or even global, with conventions, international networks...

20 years were necessary to finalize the first of the two major international legal instruments for transboundary cooperation: the 1992 UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. Nevertheless, very tangible progress has been made (and is still being made) in the EU and beyond on the basis of the tools provided by the WFD and the 1992 Convention. These progresses are fueled by international cooperation efforts, but always keeping the **exchange of riparian practitioners from transboundary basins** at the heart of the development of new concrete achievements in transboundary basins worldwide. Moreover, dealing with the consequences of climate change such as droughts highlights the importance of water sharing among neighboring countries sharing transboundary rivers.

International cooperation can take the form of roundtable discussions, study visits, budget allocations, data sharing, common projects… Among all this, **data sharing** is an essential ingredient for cooperation. The Hungarian experience presented the need to renew the strategy for data harvesting directly from the databases from the countries. Data exchange can be regulated by bilateral transboundary agreements and can help to control flood and drought situations.

More particularly, the creation of new **governance mechanisms** in the Dniester basin shared between Moldova and Ukraine or the recent intention of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine allowed to dynamise their cooperation on the Prut, one of the 3 longest tributary of the Prut over 1000 km under the framework of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).

DG INTPA underlined the important effort of the European Commission through the Team Europe Initiatives in Africa will focus on transboundary basins with in total 900 million persons who can benefit from a better river basin management framework, as well in Central Asia




*From left to right: Mr. Edouard Boinet (International Network of Basin Organizations), Mr. Jenő Lábdy (Directorate General of Water Management, Hungary), Ms. Birgit Vogel (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube), Ms. Francesca Bernardini, (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), Ms. Concepción Marcuello (Directorate General for Water, Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Spain), Ms. Ana Jeleapov (Dniester River Basin District Committee, Moldova).*

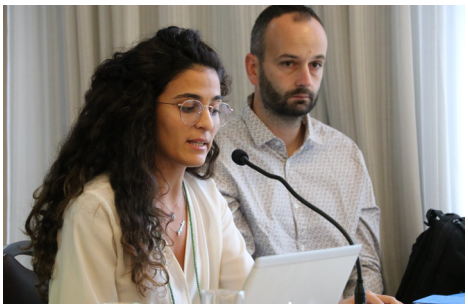
**Find out more**

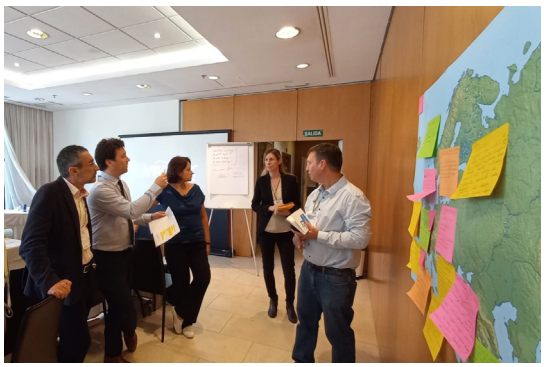
- 1992 UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes - A legal framework for regional cooperation on shared water resources (rivers, lakes and groundwaters).
- Team Europe Initiatives - Identifying critical priorities that constrain development in a given country or region, where a coordinated and coherent effort by 'Team Europe' would ensure results with a transformative impact.
- Commission on Sustainable Use and Protection of the Dniester River Basin - Covering all aspects relating to river basin issues and aimed at strengthening and expanding cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, which started in 1994.
- Danube River Basin Management Plan - Identifying the priorities for joint water resources management.

## A FEW WORDS ON THE WORKSHOPS

**River management in a climate change context: challenges and opportunities**

Climate change is having a considerable impact on water quality and quantity. Extreme events such as droughts and floods are occurring all over Europe, impacting not only biodiversity but also human activities. Examples of adaptive and integrated river management already exist (reopening of rivers, restoration of native vegetation, etc.), but certain challenges remain (conflict between water uses, management of extreme events, green water, NBS, etc.), for which basin organisations have a central role to play.





**Innovative water governance**

The many challenges facing water management today and the implementation of European directives require multi-level and cross-sectoral responses. Water governance has a key role to play in organising decisions and involving stakeholders. Innovative governance instruments exist, while others still need to be created to ensure sustainable and resilient water management. This is what the European projects InnWater, GOVAQUA and RETOUCH Nexus will be looking at over the next few years.

**The program concluded with the handover of the EUROPE-INBO presidency from France, represented by Mr. Jean Launay, President of the Conseil National de l'Eau, to Spain, represented by Mr. Teodoro Estrela, Director General for Water at the French Ministry of Ecological Transition.**