



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

**EURO INBO  
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It is advisable to firstly specify that the work of the « EURO INBO » Group aims at strengthening the common strategy for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), as formulated during the meetings of the Water Directors of the European Union. This strategy allowed the production of many orientation documents for a common understanding of the various aspects of the WFD, which were also tested in about fifteen pilot basins distributed on the whole territory of the European Union.

A first general synthesis was very recently presented at the meeting of the Water Directors in Dublin in June 2004.

The « EURO RIOB » meeting of Krakow should enrich and broaden the experience of the pilot basins by also presenting approaches and mentioning the very pragmatic questions which arise in all the other European Districts. In these Districts, studies and work were already particularly developed, **based on the inventory, required by Article 5 of the WFD** (analysis of 2004). In some Districts, this work is already in its final phase of implementation, but in many others, it is advisable to intensify it in order to produce the required inventory in 2005.

**Five topics will be dealt with in this 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the « EURO INBO » Group of European Basin Organisations in Krakow on the 27, 28 and 29 September 2004:**

- **analysis of the situations (analysis of 2004),**
- **the economic component of the WFD, in the inventory and work on cost recovery,**
- **the environmental objectives and the « good ecological status » in particular,**
- **the transboundary basins,**
- **flood prevention and control.**

### **1- Analysis of the situations:**

Since the passing of the WFD, the designated Authorities undertook much technical work focused on the delimitation of Districts then of water masses. In parallel (or consecutively), the analysis of pressures and impacts was carried out.

**At this stage, it is thus useful to initiate exchanges of experiences on the methods used to assess the pressures and impacts at the level of the Districts.**

The evolution of pressures (the significant pressures at first) and of impacts before 2015 (and later on) must be comprehended with **evolution scenarios**. The experience in this field is rather new and exchanges between District Authorities on this topic should allow progress to be made.

Finally, it is necessary to start the stages, which will follow the completion of the inventory, especially the implementation of Article 14 of the WFD. The definition of the **significant questions** which arise at the District level is the first step. It must be based on the inventory results and become the starting point of **the preparation of programmes of measures**. Article 14 also introduced the concept of **active involvement of the « parties concerned » and of public consultation**.

The **participation of the parties concerned** in the preparation of the inventory was diversely experimented in various pilot basins. It is essential to continue and widen the discussion on this topic and on **public consultation** because of their increasing significance in the WFD planning process.

### **2- Economic component of the WFD**

In addition to the use of evolution scenarios for producing the inventory, it is advisable to present a first approach aiming at estimating **the current cost recovery by sector** (domestic subscribers, industry, agriculture). The work and the existing data on this topic vary a lot depending on the Member States. In most of them, data collection is organized by administrative area and consistency problems may arise with the new District concept. Moreover, these data are often highly incomplete and an exchange of experiences on the methodologies used or planned for in the various Districts will be particularly useful. Finally, **the first work done on environmental or resource costs could be presented**.

The use of economic instruments is also essential in work that aims at determining if, for example, the water masses are heavily modified.

Finally, it is advisable to already prepare the following step of preparing **programmes of measures** planned for in the WFD. The use of economic tools is also essential for choosing the measures by using **cost-effectiveness analyses** or for estimating **the costs for integrating the provisions of the former directives** in the programme of measures.

### **3- Environmental objectives and the « good ecological status » in particular**

**The main objective of the WFD is to achieve good water status before 2015.** However, it is advisable to take account of the specific situations and some derogation possibilities do exist, either in time (longer deadline), or on the quality of the objective itself (status lower than good status). The concept of good status was the topic of an orientation document adopted during the meeting of the Water Directors in Dublin, although it is necessary to specify that no progress has been made towards a more normative

presentation of this good status. Thus, it is advisable to emphasize the particular significance of **an inter-calibration** to be set up at the European level, to harmonize methodologies and results. The inventory allows to assess **the risk of not achieving the environmental objectives**. This topic was included in an orientation paper adopted during the Dublin meeting and a first presentation of the pragmatic work already completed in some basins could be the subject matter of discussions and exchanges.

It could also be useful to make some first presentations on the topic of the **exemptions considered**, and on the concept of **heavily modified water masses** (and on the good ecological potential which is linked to them).

#### **4- The transboundary basins:**

There are many transboundary basins in Europe and almost all the Countries, the islands not included of course, are concerned at least partly. For some of them, all their surface water comes from or goes out to a nearby country, member or not of the European Union. All kinds of case do exist from mere bilateral co-operation and to the situation of the Danube basin!

The implementation of the WFD obviously leads to **a larger harmonization of the management practices and tools between the riparian Countries**, including those that are not or not yet members of the EU.

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

The **role, responsibilities and the means available to the international commissions**, either existing or to be created, will also have to be mentioned.

#### **5- Flood prevention and control**

Although this topic is not included in the cases covered by the WFD, in 2002, the Water Directors wished to progress on common approaches on flood prevention and good management practices. A Guide of good practices was drafted in 2003 and adopted during the meeting of the Water Directors. The Dutch Presidency of the European Union wishes to include this topic in European work and the informal Council of the Environment of July 2004 was devoted to it. **A paper on the management of flood hazards, prepared by the Commission, was discussed.**

In addition, the Water Directors admitted that there is a need to exchange information and know-how in the field of the management of flood hazards. Within this framework, the approach initiated on a European scale and supported by the Water Directors should be reminded, i.e. the creation of a network for exchanges on floods between topical centres.

The objective of this network is to promote inter-governmental, inter-sectoral and transboundary co-operation and exchanges on this matter. It will enable the sharing of know-how and the follow-up of good practices.

The Basin Authorities cannot ignore this particularly significant component of integrated basin management. Some of them have already envisaged to include a section on this topic in their future management plan. Many plans relative to the prevention or control of flood effects exist for various basins. A presentation of these experiments and first work, or even of the ambitions in this field, is particularly relevant to underline, for the political decision-makers, the **advantage of the European action plans or other legal tools** to be created in the European Union.

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