



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

Paris, on 19 May 2005.

Dear Sir,

Would you please favorably examine the official request of the "Group of European Basin Organizations for the implementation of the Framework Directive", European section of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), to participate in the work on the Common Strategy for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (CIS), as observer within the "Strategic Coordination Group" (SCG) and its Working Groups (WG).

INBO was created in 1994 in Aix-les-Bains 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 resource management at the level of river basins or wishing to implement it in their respective countries or regions.

The International Network of Basin Organizations is legally a non-profit association under French law, governed today by its statutes approved in 2000 during the General Assembly of Zakopane in Poland. Its head office is officially established in Paris, France, at the address below.

The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), currently present in 52 countries and gathering more than 150 permanent member organizations or observers according to its statutes, is opened to all qualified organizations which wish to become members and they are welcome, to International Commissions and organizations in charge of the integrated management of river basins and aquifers, either national or transboundary, to governmental water administrations of the countries concerned and interested in implementing river basin management, to bi or multilateral cooperation organizations, supporting actions for institutional structuring at the level of large river basins and aquifers, transboundary in particular.

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To the Director General for the Environment

Mr. Patrick MURPHY

DG ENV – European Commission

Rue de la Loi

Brussels – Belgium

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In the member or candidate countries of the European Union, the implementation of the Water Framework Directive has entered, since 2002, in an active and operational phase, which directly involves the existing Basin Organizations or the “district authorities” being created, that are facing many practical and effective problems in its field implementation and wish to have exchanges with their counterparts.

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

Numerous and interesting studies and works were also developed in other districts, and it is useful for them to exchange the difficulties encountered, their results or very operational and concrete experience accumulated in the field.

During the INBO meeting of Valencia, Spain, on 11 and 12 November 2003, it appeared that there was a need for informal exchanges of practical experiences between the volunteer Basin Organizations, in addition to the official European platform. That is the reason why, it was decided to organize, within the Network, an open group of European basin organizations, called “**EURO-INBO**”, for the implementation of the WFD, without creation of any new structure or particular framework.

These INBO activities must indeed be complementary to ongoing efforts and must avoid setting up parallel or competing structures.

The “EURO INBO” working group aims at enriching the common strategy for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (CIS-WFD) without duplicating work already done or ongoing.

The objective is to facilitate the field process by direct contacts between the public bodies in charge which would be or are interested in our group, created on a voluntary basis and free involvement. It is also important to point out the fact that some of them are also coming from Eastern Europe, NIS or Mediterranean countries where interest for the WFD is obvious.

The purpose of the last plenary meeting of the "EURO-INBO" group, held in Krakow on 27 and 28 September 2004, was in particular to enrich and widen the pilot basin exercise, by also presenting different approaches and by mentioning the very pragmatic questions from other European Districts: the organizations of 32 Countries were represented.

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The next meeting of the "EURO-INBO" group will take place in Namur, Belgium, from 29 September to 1st October 2005, at the invitation of the Walloon Region and of the basin organizations of the international district of the Maas.

The organizations participating in the "EURO-INBO" exchange their experiences through four complementary activities:

- Organizing regular meetings, either yearly plenary sessions or thematic workshops whenever necessary. Apart from an exchange of experiences, these meetings result in the identification of the main concerns of basin organizations involved in the practical implementation of the WFD.
- Developing the "EURO-INBO" website: This common website will gather case studies and documents produced by basin organizations or District Authorities such as the "initial characterizations" planned for the end of 2004 (abstracts in English, links with the sites of the basin organizations). This site will also include current information, a forum for discussions and frequently asked questions, links towards new documents and information sources produced at the European level.
- Promoting training programs for executives and staffs of Basins Organizations.
- Establishing twinning arrangements between basin organizations of different countries facing common problems, notably within the TWINBASIN project or existing agreements.

Our request to be accepted as partner of the "SCG" aims at strengthening the coordination of actions undertaken by our members with those decided by the Water Directors and the Commission, in order to develop real added value, to inform about some interesting experiments developed in the field and pass the practical questions coming from basin organizations.

I wish, like all the members of our group, for a favorable answer to this request and I remain,

Sincerely yours.

Jean-François DONZIER
Permanent Technical Secretary
International Network of Basin Organizations

