

Some remarks in connection with the 25 years INBO anniversary (A Hungarian view by a former INBO LB member)

Last year in Marrakesh on the 11. World General Assembly of INBO we have celebrated the 25 years anniversary of INBO cooperation. It was a privilege that I could participate on this celebration event with the kind help of Mr. László Kóthay, former Hungarian INBO President.

If we study the homepage of INBO we could find detailed information about the results of this international organization. The interested reader could study on the homepage what topics were discussed year by year by the World General Assembly and in the framework of the regional networks. Also we could find on the homepage all the lectures delivered on the events which are already equal with an on-line library. It is really very useful when we study the history of INBO. But at the same time we must not forget the lecturers, the participants and the organisers! So, we must not forget about the human aspects of INBO cooperation!

It was a Hungarian initiative made in 2018 on the EURO INBO Conference in Sevilla that the Secretariat invited the earlier INBO Presidents to take part on the jubilee meeting. By this invitation four INBO Presidents arrived to Marrakesh who were active in the first period of INBO cooperation (1996-2010), namely: Sr. Raymundo Jose Garrido from Brasil (third INBO President), M. Pierre Baril from Canada (fifth INBO President), Mme. Madelaine Jouye de Grandmaison from Martinique (sixth INBO President) and Mr. László Kóthay from Hungary (seventh INBO Presidents).

Of course the high level representants of the second decade of INBO (who are nowadays the active participants of the cooperation) also took part in the celebration headed by INBO Secretary General, M. Eric Tardieu. And M. Jean-François Donzier as all the time Technical Secretary of INBO was the connecting personality between the two group.

I want to mention other former partners who also participated in Marrakesh: Sr. Ramiro Martinez (Spain), M. Jacky Cottet (France), Mr. Daniel Valensuela and M. Alain Bernard (INBO Secretariat).

Some important persons were missing: Sr. Eduardo Mestre, the organizer of the first INBO General Assembly and first INBO President (Mexico), further on Sr. Aragones Beltran (Spain), the second, Pan Tomasz Walczykiewicz (Poland), the fourth and Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug (OMVS), the eighth INBO President.

For me missed yet the following personalities: Mme. Josiane Mongellaz (INBO Secretariat), Sr. Teodoro Estrela Monreal (Spain), Ms. Daniela Radulescu and Mr. Ovidiu Gabor (Roumania), Mr. Pavel Punčochař (Czech Republic), Ms. Galia Balusheva (Bulgaria), Mr. Victor Dukhovny (Uzbekistan), Sr. Celso Velasquez (Paraguay), M. Jean-Marie Wauthier (Belgium) and Mr. Walter Mazzitti (Italy).

In the starting period the following country-representatives were the the most active in the INBO cooperation: France, Spain, Roumania, Poland, Brasil and Mexico. The Office International de l'Eau (France) headed by M. Jean-François Donzier provided the Secretariat for the new international organisation. The staff of INBO Secretariat maintained contacts with the member organisations, organised the events and helped the INBO Presidents as well. We are very thankful for their activity.

I should like to mention yet the importance of the Roumanian and Polish activity at the beginning of INBO cooperation. In connection with this I want to recall the names of Ms. Gentiane Serbu and Mr. Myeczislaw Ostojki. After Spain, Brasil and Poland the Canadian partners headed by M. Pierre Baril organised the fifth World General Assembly. The next WGA was held in Martinique, also succesfully.

Step by step were created the regional networks of INBO. From human aspects we have to mention first those basin organisations which took part in the creation and the management of these networks. The Latin American Network of Basin Organisations (LANBO) was the first regional network (created in 1998) where the role of the Brasilian basin organisations was very important. It was a privilage for me that I participated in Mendoza (1999) and in Foz do Iguacu (2001) on the meetings of LANBO by the invitation of Sr. Carlos Abihaggle and Sr. Eduardo Mestre.

In 2002 were created the African and Central-European Networks (ANBO and CEENBO). For ANBO the Secretariat provided by OMVS and for CEENBO Apele Romane respectively. This way Senegal and Roumania played important role in these networks. 2003 was the year of EURO-INBO and MENBO (Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations) with very important Spanish contribution. We have to underline the role of Confederacion Hidrografica del Jucar. For EURO-INBO the first conference was organised in Valencia and for MENBO the Secretariat provided by Jucar.

Finally I wish to deal with the Hungarian participation in INBO. Hungary was represented already on the Constituting Meeting in Aix les Bains/Chambéry in 1994. Two years later Mr. Miklós Varga, the General Director of the National Water Authority (OVF) undersigned the Membership Document in Morelia. During our stay in Mexico we felt the strong support of the Mexican authorities because OVF had a good bilateral cooperation with CNA (CONAGUA) that time.

The INBO membership provided a sound basis for principles which must be used in transboundary water management cooperation as well. And for Hungary the transboundary cooperation is extremely important in the middle of the Carpathian Basin, having seven neighbouring countries. It was obvious that the National Water Authority agreed with the initiative to formulate a special network which deals with the transboundary basins. Therefore we have participated in Thonon-les-Bains and in Dakar on statutory meetings of INTBO.

NWA Hungary with the exception of the Salvador WGA participated on all INBO events till 2010. For me it was a privilege that many occasions I even substituted Mr. Miklós Varga abroad. On the sixth WGA started a stronger Hungarian activity in INBO. We declared that Hungary is ready to organise the seventh INBO General Assembly. The above mentioned stronger Hungarian activity lasted between 2004 and 2010 when the presidency was transferred to OMVS in Dakar (Senegal).

In the successful organisation of 7. INBO World General Assembly, which was held in Debrecen the Trans Tisza Region Water Directorate (TIVIZIG) had important role beside the new National General Directorate (OKTVF). In connection with this I have to mention the names of Mr. László Kóthay, Ms. Eszter Kovács and Ms. Annamária Nagy.

In the 8. INBO World General Assembly the TIVIZIG organised a Hungarian Soirée with Hungarian food, folk music and dance. It was the first Hungarian cultural event in Senegal. The successful evening was due to the very good contacts with OMVS, personally with M. Mohamed Salem Ould Merzough and M. Tamsir Ndiaye. We received the support of the Hungarian Honorary Consul in Dakar as well.

The second main goal for Hungary was the creation of EURO-INBO. It was more important for us as the CEENBO, however we have participated in this regional network as well. By the guidance of Mr. Miklós Varga we raised the question of European cooperation from the beginning of INBO. We highly appreciated the readiness of the Spanish partners and namely Confederacion Hidrografica del Jucar to organise the first European Conference in Valencia, which provided basis for the creation of EURO-INBO.

INBO provided good possibilities for the bilateral contacts as well. From Hungarian point of view it is worth to mention that during INBO events we could manage bilateral matters with our French, Spanish, Czech, Roumanian and Polish partners. We used the Network Newsletter to provide more information worldwide on the state of art of the Hungarian water management. There was a Special Network Newsletter Edition on the results of the Hungarian Presidency 2007-2009.

Altogether the INBO cooperation was very useful for the Hungarian Water Sector mainly in the period of 1994-2011. Therefore I dealt only with this period in this article. After 2011 the official Hungarian participation stopped, but I could participate yet three times on INBO events, as a former INBO LB member.

Budapest, 08 July 2020.

Kálmán Papp

Former International Director of NWA Hungary (OVF)