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INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANISATIONS
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Международная сеть водохозяйственных организаций

« **EUROPE-INBO 2007** »
5th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

—◆—
GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007
OF THE MEDITERRANEAN NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS

—◆—
ROME (ITALY)
08, 09 and 10 NOVEMBER 2007

FINAL RESOLUTIONS

191 representatives of governmental administrations in charge of water resources management, of basin organizations or district authorities **coming from 33 countries:** Belgium, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the International Commissions of the Scheldt, the Rhine and the Sava, as well as representatives from the Kosovo Province, Quebec-Canada, Algeria, China, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal, Uzbekistan, FAO, the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the Council of Europe, EUREAU, the Technological Platform for water and sanitation and the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS) **met in Rome in Italy, from 8 to 10 November 2007, at the invitation of the Italian Ministry of the Environment and the Italian Basin Organizations**, under the auspices of the **Group of European Basin Organizations (EUROPE-INBO) for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD)**, 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).

INBO World Liaison Bureau held also a statutory meeting.

The «**EUROPE-INBO 2007**» Conference, itself, was organized simultaneously with **the General Assembly 2007 of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO)**.

The Conference was honored by the presence of his Excellency Mr. **Alfonso PECORARO SCANIO**, Italian Minister for the Environment, who opened the meeting with many Italian personalities representing the City of Rome, the Parliament and Regions. The participants also appreciated the presence among them of Mrs. Lubka KATCHAKOVA, Vice-Minister in Bulgaria, Mr. Lazlo KOTHAY, State Secretary in Hungary and of several Water Directors and Deputy Directors of the participating countries.

THE « EUROPE-INBO » GROUP

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) n°2000/60/EC of 23 October 2000 lays down an objective of good water status before 2015 in the national and international river basin districts of all the European Union.

The «EUROPE-INBO» Group for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive was created in November 2003 during the meeting in Valencia, Spain. The plenary assemblies of the « EUROPE-INBO » Group then took place in September 2004 in Krakow, Poland, in September 2005 in Namur in the Walloon Region (Belgium) and in September 2006 in Megève, France.

The work of the «EUROPE-INBO» group aims at enriching the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) for the Water Framework Directive (WFD) without duplicating work done within the CIS. The EUROPE-INBO group allows Basin Organizations and District Authorities to meet regularly, in an informal way, to exchange their practical experience, to identify the operational problems which they encounter in the field and to make proposals for effective implementation of the Directive.

This work is in the continuity of the recommendations and decisions of the Committee of the Water Directors of the European Union and of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) led by the European Commission, in which INBO is an active partner who regularly transmit information coming from its Member Organizations and who will officially communicate the conclusions of this European conference in Rome. INBO has been involved in the SCG since 2005.

THE «EUROPE-INBO» CONFERENCE 2007 IN ROME

The Rome Conference was organized around **three main current topics**:

1. **Cost of the Water Framework Directive**: preparation of Management Plans and Programs of Measures and their financing, economic studies, water price, etc.
2. **Consequences of global warming**: prevention and management of extreme climatic phenomena of floods and droughts, situation in the Mediterranean Region.
3. **Public consultation**: outcomes of the first consultations required by the WFD and lessons learned for the next consultation to be done in 2008.

As the meeting was taking place in Italy, special attention was paid to issues specific to water management in the Mediterranean region.

After the yearly meetings of 2004, 2005 and 2006, the meeting of 2007 shows that the basin organizations of the Member States are now in an active phase of the Water Framework Directive implementation, and that more and more countries, outside the European Union, are interested in using the WFD principles.

The «EUROPE-INBO» group notes that the European basin organizations as a whole have made significant progress: administrative adaptations, data gathering and analyses, public information and stakeholders involvement, characterization of the river basin districts, setting of monitoring networks, etc.

The management plans and programs of measures, required for 2009, are at various development stages and the corresponding public enquiry, to be made in 2008, is being prepared. This stage will be decisive to achieve the good status objectives laid down by the Water Framework Directive.

37 papers were presented during the Rome Conference.

□ The delegates proposed the following recommendations to improve WFD implementation:

1. Cost of the Water Framework Directive

➤ Preparation and financing of Programs of Measures

We are at the beginning of the development process of the management plans and programs of measures required by the Water Framework Directive for 2009. It is thus too early to draw final conclusions. But the first approaches, which were presented, allowed making some recommendations:

- Working on a **local scale**: it is recommended to develop, in consistency with the main guidelines of the management plan, plans for sub-basins and local programs of measures (river contracts, etc.).
- Maximizing the involvement of **the local stakeholders in the preparation of programs of measures**, by mobilizing the already existing -or to be created- participative structures (Basin Committees). It is especially necessary to very strongly mobilize **local authorities** as their role is essential in field implementation.
- Adopting a **pragmatic approach** for not delaying the actions to be carried out in the short term.
- Defining **the data and indicators to be gathered** for following up and assessing the impact of the measures taken.
- Combining **various types of financial, regulatory, contractual measures**, and thus strengthening **coordination** between the various State services, the basin organizations and local authorities.

- Speeding up **agricultural and water sanitation measures**, which are, with the hydro-morphological changes in rivers, the main factors of the risk of not achieving good status: integrating in the programs of measures the priorities of the urban waste water directive and the directive on nitrates.
- **Better coordination between water policy and the Common Agricultural Policy is essential**: It is necessary to identify the areas in which agricultural pressures have a significant impact on water quality and prioritize the means necessary to restore water quality.
- Increasing the means devoted to the management of **aquatic environments and wetlands, to hydro-morphology and the biological functioning of ecosystems**; defining stricter environmental objectives in protected areas, as planned in the WFD.
- Examples of presented measures:
 - « Agricultural » measures: drastically reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, protecting drinking water intakes, raising awareness and training of farmers, complying with standards for animal husbandry, reducing erosion and the transfer of pollutants to rivers, etc.
 - « Sanitation » measures: building wastewater treatment plants, increasing capacity and treatment level, repair and renewal of wastewater collection systems, storm water collection and treatment, compliance with standards as regards connections, on-site sanitation, etc.
 - « Industrial » measures: treatment of hot spots, chlorinated solvents, PAH, removal of PCBs, priority substances, ... the importance of reducing dangerous substances, and the link with the implementation of the “REACH” European Regulation, were underlined.
 - « Hydro-morphological » measures: restoration/protection of river banks, restoration of river sections, land acquisition (wetlands, banks), maintenance of rivers and wetlands, suppression/reduction of dams and creation of fishways, restoration of ecological continuity, etc.
- Increasing financial means significantly and **mobilizing specific financial resources, based on the “polluter-pays” principle** and “user-pays” systems. Implementing actions will require very great financial efforts to carry out the necessary investments.
- Spreading the costs on two or three successive programs of measures because the costs needed to achieve good status are likely to be very often higher than the financial resources which can be mobilized for the first program of measures (principle of temporal exemptions and importance of economic studies to justify them).

➤ Economic studies

Economic studies are essential for WFD implementation. They must meet practical needs: defining the objectives (especially possible needs for exemptions) and selecting the actions to be implemented within the program of measures to achieve its objectives (cost/effectiveness analysis).

Findings:

- **Overall work progress:** work is progressing, but the data are still too often incomplete and uncertainties remain on the methodologies to be used : cost and effectiveness of measures, disproportionate cost, and way of spreading out the exemptions of delay... Some Member States and basin organizations have developed practical tools but the methods used are different from one district to another, including sometimes within the same State.
- **Disproportionate costs** (article 4 WFD): the WFD does not define the concept of disproportionate cost, and thus each basin can take a different definition. Several basin organizations presented their work on indicators, which allow identifying whether a cost seems disproportionate or not. They underline the need to work in close cooperation with all the economic partners concerned (farmers, industrialists, elected officials, etc.) in order to approach cost reality as much as possible. It was underlined that the disproportionate cost criteria are often not known and are not the same among river basin districts. This may raise a problem of competition, mainly in international river districts, especially for the industrialists who, according to their geographical location, can see themselves imposed measures for 2015 or benefiting from delays.
- **Rate of cost recovery of the services related to water use** (art. 9 WFD): the report drawn up by the DG Environment in March 2007 indicates that this economic analysis is still incomplete in many Member States, with problems to clearly identify the services related to water use or to integrate the environmental costs, etc. Methods were presented by several basin organizations. It appeared that the Member States do not use the same method for calculation; therefore there are significant disparities in the recovery rate. For example, when the cost of the renewal of assets (networks, facilities) is integrated into the total cost, this leads to a recovery rate definitely lower. Methodological uncertainties on the evaluation of the cost recovery rate are likely to make difficult the evaluation of the cost-benefit ratio of measures and thus the choice of measures.
- **Impact on the water price:** Methods for calculation were presented; they showed that the impact of the program of measures on the water price varies according to the current level of taxes and water charges, but that an increase in the water price is however to be foreseen in most cases.

Some recommendations:

- **Sharing experience, harmonizing methods** (environmental cost assessment, spreading out costs, rate of cost recovery, cost-effectiveness models for measures, etc.) and developing **socioeconomic indicators and reference values common to all the Member States** (disproportionate cost, impact on water price,...) in order to consolidate the analyses and to support the possible exemptions, by taking into account economic and social acceptability: for example the weight of the water invoice compared to the average household income, the weight of the program of measures compared to the GDP, etc.
- The «EUROPE-INBO» group recommended carrying out work at the European level, in the international districts as a priority, to identify the differences in methods and to harmonize criteria. As concerns the water price, it would be useful to build a **“European water price” indicator** with the same components in order to have comparative data.
- **Consolidating information** (program for data gathering, creation of databases)... and training **economists specialized in the water field**.
- Involving **local stakeholders** in the evaluation of the cost of actions and in the setting of the exemptions which could be necessary: this will be the key to guarantee effective and realistic implementation of the Framework Directive.
- Giving **necessary explanations to the consumers** but also to the decision-makers (local elected officials in particular) to make the stakes understandable and to make the increase in the water price acceptable (to be planned for in the information and communication activities planned by article 14).

➤ As regards international districts in particular

- ♦ The «EUROPE-INBO» group noted the significant progress made with the coordinated development of management plans and programs of measures in some international districts (common catalogues of measures, coordinated objectives, common socioeconomic indicators). It encourages the fostering and generalization of this work and reaffirmed the recommendations of the « EUROPE-INBO 2005 » meeting in Namur, especially: to promote a bottom-up approach and develop exchanges on methods and tools, using the work done by the countries sharing the international district.
- **Strengthening the action of the existing international bodies and supporting the creation of international commissions.**
- Strengthening cooperation programs for the management of shared basins with the countries neighboring the EU within the European Neighborhood Policy (Mediterranean countries, Central Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia), through projects, supported by the European Commission, for WFD implementation in these basins. These cooperation programs could have the form of twinning arrangements between countries or basins, for instance.

Conclusion of Workshop 1:

The total cost and benefit of the Framework Directive are difficult to evaluate, insofar as the costs of implementation will depend on the ambition of the management plans and programs of measures which will be known only in 2009. It is still difficult to estimate the contribution of the “urban waste water” and “nitrates” directives in achieving the WFD objectives. At the level of river basin districts, assessing the cost-benefit of the measures is essential to optimize the efficiency of the program of measures and thus to maximize the effect of each invested euro.

There are methodological difficulties and lack of data. The participants underlined the important needs to exchange experiences and methods. The «EUROPE-INBO» group noted with interest that a group led by the DG Environment is currently drawing up a methodological document on exemptions from good status and how these requests for exemption must be supported by economic studies. It thinks that the basin organizations should actively participate in it and exchange their experience.

The «EUROPE-INBO» group especially underlined the interest of developing, on a European scale and between basin organizations, common socioeconomic indicators, as well as criteria and coordinated methods, allowing making the necessary comparisons to strengthen analyses. The development of common reference values is needed, especially with regard to the concept of disproportionate cost, due to possible impacts in terms of economic competitiveness.

The «EUROPE-INBO» group could support basin organizations by developing initiatives in this field: group of exchanges, European seminar, website to gather good practices, etc.

Significant support from the European regional cohesion funds will be essential for achieving the WFD objectives in some new member or candidate countries of the European Union.

2. Consequences of global warming:

➤ Prevention and management of extreme climatic phenomena

The participants underlined that global warming is from now on a reality and that changes are undeniable.

The presentations showed that **fresh water resources have been directly affected in quantity and quality for more than 20 years**: increase in the frequency of extreme phenomena (drought, floods), changes in river flows, seriousness of low water levels and increase in the concentrations of polluting and toxic substances in water, low groundwater recharge, increase in pollution by nitrates and water stress.

The ecological, economic and human consequences of climate change may be very significant. The effects will be different according to the areas and climate scenarios. The European countries will be affected: the Mediterranean countries by increasingly repeated water stress and those of Northern Europe by the rise of sea level, ice melt, coastal erosion and land subsidence. Thus, for example, the rise of temperatures and, consequently, the increase in evaporation losses of crops should result in an increase in water abstraction to meet the irrigation demand.

The Framework Directive does not directly take climate change into account but can contribute in better preventing and managing its effects.

The «EUROPE-INBO» group recommended to the basin organizations to take into account the constraints related to climate change **in the WFD implementation**, and in particular:

- To develop **research programs** on climate and hydrological mechanisms, on the impact of water use on water stress and on the effects of climate change on the aquatic environments and ecosystems.
- To adopt a **European common approach** for better preventing the effects of climate change: research programs, coordination of actions.
- The «EUROPE-INBO» group applauds the initiative of the European Commission, which launched, in June 2007, a debate on the European adaptation to climate change (Green Paper) which should lead, at the end of 2008, to a White Paper on practical actions and impact assessment;
- It recommended, as for the Framework Directive, to lead joint works between Member States to implement the Flood Directive adopted in September 2007 (directive n°2007/60/EC published in the Official Journal of the European Community on 6 November 2007), of which the timetable and method were precisely designed to stick to the WFD.
- In the same way, in continuation of the EU paper on water resource scarcity and drought, European and Euro-Mediterranean collaboration is essential.
- To anticipate the consequences of the climate change: **to evaluate, according to various scenarios**, the hydrological consequences of climate change **in each basin** (it may be useful to organize in river basin districts regional meetings gathering decision-makers and researchers for instance).
- To launch **pilot projects** to define baseline scenarios for the basins and to launch actions (following the example of what is carried out in France on the Meuse and Loire river basins).
- To integrate preventive measures and adaptation measures **in the management plans and programs of measures** with an action plan and deadlines. To take into account the interaction between quantitative and qualitative aspects and have an overall approach to quantitative management (droughts, floods). The «EUROPE-INBO» group underlined that the WFD provides tools, provided that the corresponding measures are actually taken (in particular concerning the quantitative status of groundwater, river hydro-morphology, pricing and cost recovery).
- To develop **monitoring networks** for temperatures and river flows by supplementing the monitoring networks planned by the Framework Directive; to organize an ecological watch (evolution of fish populations, new pathologies).
- To set up **national information systems**, in relation with observatories of water resources and their uses at the level of basins.
- To develop and coordinate **warning systems for floods and droughts**.

➤ **As regards floods:**

- **Increasing « upstream-downstream » common cause in all river basins and sub-basins and especially strengthening cooperation between riparian States for the transboundary basins** (especially relying on international commissions as in WFD implementation): mapping of flood-prone areas, pooling data, plans for flood prevention, coordinated actions especially for the controlled and dynamic management of flood plains, warning procedures, sharing of responsibilities.
- To facilitate the directive implementation in the Member States, the European Circles of exchanges are useful platforms (especially the European Exchange Circle on the Mapping of Floods - EXCIMAP)

➤ **As regards droughts:**

- Prevention cannot any more be done on a case-by-case basis but must be **planned in the long term** by solving structural problems in order to prevent their effects in the best possible way and to avoid the total degradation of the water resource,
- Also increasing « upstream-downstream » common cause, data sharing and the coordination of actions between basins, especially in international river basin districts.
- It is necessary to ensure a **better development** of existing water resources. New resources should only be mobilized when it is ecologically acceptable and economically reasonable,
- Fostering the creation of water users' associations for better balanced, sound and more concerted management.
- Taking measures to preserve/restore **balance between water offer and demand** on a basin scale; to pass from a **policy of offer to a policy of demand** and thus to give priority to measures which allow:
 - limiting the demand of the various economic and domestic sectors, such as water saving actions (leak detection, repair and renewal of drinking water supply networks, less water consuming industrial processes, development of the metering of water withdrawals and of a policy of differentiated prices),
 - promoting a better use of water resources (treated wastewater re-use, recovery of storm water, artificial groundwater recharge, desalination of sea water),
 - limiting water abstraction for irrigation.
- Developing **Management Plans for drought** or management plans for water scarcity, to **supplement the management plan and program of measures**, at the national level and at the level of basins and sub-basins

To pass from crisis management to risk management, to anticipate the consequences on the environments and economic sectors integrating prevention and attenuation measures. These plans must prioritize drinking water supply as compared to the other uses, take care of equitable and rational water sharing between the various uses, ensure better water development and avoid wastage. They must be discussed **with all the stakeholders by combining dialogue and regulations**.

- Reinforcing **water policing** (controls), developing the allocation of resources with **water quotas** and taking measures of **restriction for water uses** in case of drought.
- Taking care of the **interaction between quantitative and qualitative aspects**, and of overall ground and surface water management, with special attention paid to **wetlands**.

To face climate change, the «EUROPE-INBO» group once again affirmed the need for a **really integrated and concerted water resource management** at the level of river basins and for disseminating very quickly these principles on a worldwide scale.

It is necessary to take the opportunity of the necessary adaptation to the climate change to evolve towards **sustainable development**.

Of course, **the participation of the local stakeholders and the public on these issues is essential**.

➤ **Situation in the Mediterranean basin:**

The Mediterranean basin is likely to be one of the most affected areas over the world. The effects of global warming will be significant on the water regime and will increase “water stress”. The availability of fresh water, in sufficient quantity and quality, may be, in a generation, one of the main factors limiting economic and social development and not only in Mediterranean area. The problem of water sharing between irrigation, tourist areas and basic human needs (drinking water) is now arising in many places. It is essential to prepare for it and anticipate it. **The real problem is not so much to mobilize new resources but to rationalize uses!**

PRIORITY N°1: Adapting water management to climate change.

It is vital to adapt the policies for water resources management (quantity and quality), by taking into account the elements of the climate change.

- Strengthening research programs to assess the hydrological consequences of climate change in the Mediterranean basin
- Creating an observatory of water resources and their uses, coordinated between all the Mediterranean countries: feasibility studies have already been carried out within the Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System – EMWIS
- Rationalizing water uses should be the first priority to improve efficiency and reduce water consumption: establishing a policy for fighting against wastages in all sectors (agriculture, drinking water supply, industry); in particular not supporting the development of irrigation in areas already water deficient or vulnerable to drought (unless absolute necessity and then everything should be done to save water);

defining maximum abstraction quantities, limiting or suspending water uses in case of drought, preparing “drought” action plans; developing instruments for managing water demand and especially a water pricing policy; developing innovation in less water consuming technologies...

Sound management would allow saving, in 2025, 24% of the foreseen demand, thus avoiding the building of about 100 dams. It is thus necessary to imperatively, and first of all, use less water for the same result, either in irrigation, in industry or in the cities.

- Also developing the re-use of treated wastewater for some specific uses (industry or certain types of irrigated crops) and the desalination of sea water (but sea water desalination is a solution only for drinking water supply, it is not a solution for irrigation which requires too much raw water, and environmental impacts should be taken into account, such as the discharge of brine and energy consumption)
- Making up for lost time as regards urban sanitation and increasing means for the maintenance and renewal of installations: even if the financial needs are huge, the economic benefit of sanitation is very definitely higher than the costs of the necessary investments and maintenance!
- implementing a policy for reducing agricultural non-point pollution

PRIORITY N°2: Modernizing the institutions and capacity building.

- Promoting integrated water resources management at the level of river basins and the essential role of basin organizations, with water management planning in the medium and long term, investment plans, financing based on the polluter-pays principle and on the participation of water stakeholders and users: the participants underlined the interest of implementing the WFD principles, by adapting them to the specificities of the Mediterranean basin and the importance of a Euro-Mediterranean common cause.
 - Supporting the creation of international commissions and strengthening those which already exist, to organize sound management of transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers between the riparian countries.
 - Organizing and revising water policing: authorization for abstractions and discharges, protection of the natural environments.
 - Establishing or developing industrial and commercial management of community services of municipal and irrigation water, with equitable pricing between the users, allowing the recovery of all the operation and capital costs of the services.
 - Developing basic and continuing professional training of water professionals: it is necessary to create or build in the short term local capacities for professional training with training courses adapted to the local situation; this implies the creation of professional training institutions with the necessary financing channel.
- The creation of a Mediterranean Network of training centers for water professions will be able to support exchanges on new teaching aids, knowledge to be taught, to allow the development of common training tools according to the needs, to mobilize means, to implement them, to share contents in the main Mediterranean languages.

PRIORITY N°3: Facilitating access to information and knowledge.

For facilitating the gathering of institutional, economic and technical information, its harmonization and dissemination to all the interested stakeholders, it is necessary to support the creation and networking of national documentation and water data systems, the development of which is ongoing within the Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System - EMWIS.

It is also important to have a better vision of the research programs on water in the Mediterranean basin and to more widely disseminate their results, within the European « IWRM – Net » project in particular.

3. Public consultation:

The basin organizations have now organized the first two stages of public consultations required by the WFD (end of 2006 at the latest as regards timetable and work program; end of 2007 at the latest on the significant water management issues identified in the river basin district).

Outcomes of the first public consultations:

The addresses were very rich and diversified. They raised 4 types of remarks:

- 1) Improvement in communication techniques: As regards public participation, the basin organizations improved their communication techniques, by working with sociologists or by better defining their objectives.
- 2) Establishment of suited governance: In order to ensure consistency between districts, most countries elaborated a national framework. International coordination was often established in international river basin districts. The basin organizations involved the stakeholders and a partnership with NGOs was often set up. For better effectiveness, the basin organizations often organized public consultation and participation at sub-basin level.
- 3) Various tools and methods: Local meetings in sub-basins are regarded as an essential tool for information and awareness-raising. The answers from the public are collected either by questionnaires or by Internet.
- 4) Lessons learned for the future: Among the weaknesses and difficulties noted by the participants, there is in particular the lack of human and financial resources. These first public consultations allowed better knowledge of public expectations, which will be very useful for the future. Owing to the experience of the Member States which started before the first consultation imposed by the Framework Directive (France, for example, anticipated at the end of the characterization of river basin districts in 2005), the fact of anticipating teaches lessons and allows an early population's awareness. It appeared that, as compared to other topics of public consultations, water is a field which raises much interest, which is very positive for the continuation of work.

Recommendations for the next public consultation in 2008:

The following lessons could be drawn for preparing the enquiry of 2008 on management plans and programs of measures

- Involving the stakeholders and the public **from** the first stages onwards is a factor of success.
- **Distinguishing information from consultation** because these are two different objectives which require different tools and timetable:
 - communication on water management and stakes;
 - promotion of the public consultation and incentive for the public to participate
- Giving a framework at the national level, especially a single timetable for the whole national territory, but **favoring the basin** (district) and sub-basin scale for the consultation and work at **the most locally possible geographical scale (“sub-basin”) with a bottom up approach**;
- **Adapting the tools** according to the targeted publics, the geographical scale, the enquiry objectives and to the specificity of the territories, for the international districts in particular;
- Coordinating the enquiry process and timetable in the **international river basin districts**: the «EUROPE-INBO» group applauded the first initiatives which developed a common strategy for public participation on an international district scale and recommended this approach in all the international districts, relying on the **international commissions**;
- Raising awareness of the **decision makers and people in charge** at the highest hierarchical levels, and that, for each work scale (local, regional, national);
- **Distinguishing the participation of water stakeholders from public consultation**;
- **As regards the water stakeholders’ participation**:
 - Organizing this participation within basin committees or councils on a basin and sub-basin scale;
 - These basin authorities will have to be **associated in the decisions concerning the basin water policy**, with procedures clearly defining their role in the preparation of the decisions to be taken by the qualified Public Authorities. In particular, they will have to participate in the definition of the long-term objectives and in the development of the management plans, in the selection of priorities for facilities and infrastructures, in the implementation of the programs of measures and multi-year priority investments, and in defining the principles for financing and calculating the water taxes which concern them.
- **As regards the information and consultation of the « general public »** :
 - **Relying on the field stakeholders** (local elected officials, NGOs): the success of the consultation of the general public depends on the degree of mobilization of the local stakeholders;
 - Having, at the same time, a global communication and adapting it to the different targeted publics (especially awareness of the young in school);

- Identifying precisely the **main issues of interest** for the general public in each local context (drinking water supply, water price, neighborhood issues, etc): preparing **strong arguments for motivating** the public and **explaining the stakes**, relying on local issues;
- combining **various information tools**: communication campaigns with the media (TV, press, radio, Internet), booklets, mails in the mail-boxes, local public meetings, field visits to explain the functioning of a river, awareness programs for schools, etc.
- **Not limiting itself to written enquiries**, questionnaires and on lining on the Internet: the «EUROPE-INBO» group recommended organizing local meetings and **public debates**;
- Communicating in a **less administrative way**; being **pedagogical**; having a **simple language adapted to the general public** (need for close work between water specialists and **communication specialists**) while avoiding too technical or bureaucratic terms, which would be inaccessible to the greatest number of citizens.
- Ensuring **transparency** in decision-making and also communicating on uncertainties! Explaining the decisions made and reporting the obtained results, while keeping in mind that the users finance the measures taken.

Conclusion of Workshop 3

The main meeting of 2008 should not be missed!

These consultations will have a cost and it is necessary to plan specific budgets. Experience sharing is necessary to define the most suitable methods according to the various cases and to the cost-effectiveness study of the various tools. The participants thus proposed to gather and exchange good practices, for instance in the form of an INBO-WFD website on information and consultation tools.

- ❑ **As regards the Mediterranean component of the European Water Initiative and especially the joint process between the European Water Initiative (EUWI) and the Water Framework Directive (WFD):**

Some members expressed the wish to increase and better coordinate the actions, which allow working on the convergence of water legislation between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries, especially to take the main WFD principles into account and to adapt them by developing specific projects and twinning arrangements.

This topic could be included into the program of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water, which could be organized by the French Presidency of the European Union and planned, as far as we know, in the second semester of 2008.

□ **The participants reaffirmed their wish for continuing the exchange of their experience, through:**

- The organization of regular meetings, yearly plenary sessions or topical 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 Framework Directive.
- The improvement of information availability. **Access to information on WFD implementation in the different countries of the European Union and even more in the various River Basin Districts, still remains complex and very difficult for basin organizations.** It would be interesting to have case studies easily available as well as the documents produced by the European basin organizations and District Authorities, such as the « initial characterizations » of river basin districts carried out at the end of 2004 (abstract in English, links with the websites of basin organizations), and other documents produced in the frame of the WFD implementation. A forum for discussions and answers to frequently asked questions should also be very useful.
- The development of twinning agreements between basin organizations of different countries facing common problems, such as those successfully developed within the **European TWINBASIN project**, which unfortunately is now completed without any prospect at the moment.
- The promotion of training and professional capacity building programs for the executives and staffs of Basins Organizations, especially with the WFD-LEARN program, whose prototype of joint distance teaching and sharing of experience has already encouraging results.
- The development of research programs. The “IWRM-NET” project, financed by the Research DG of the European Commission also raised much interest, as it should allow a better link between the basin organizations and research institutions, thus facilitating the taking into account of the field stakeholders’ concerns and the dissemination of knowledge for the implementation of the directive. The interest of the WISE-RTD platform was also underlined.

The participants support the launching of new joint projects that associate INBO and its regional networks, especially:

- 1. To support the continuation of twinning arrangements between basin organizations or the signing of new twinning agreements, especially in the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, Caucasian and Central Asian regions.**
- 2. To establish performance indicators enabling comparisons between basins.**
- 3. To create a base of practical references on the methods for public information, consultation and participation.**

□ INBO WILL ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE 5TH WORLD WATER FORUM

The participants wished that INBO continue the brain-storming started after the World Water Forums of The Hague, Kyoto and Mexico City and propose its vision on the evolution of water management in the coming years, for the 5th World Water Forum of Istanbul in March 2009.

They proposed to the organizers of the 5th World Water Forum that INBO organize preliminary work on the topic “water management at the level of basins and transboundary waters”, in partnership with all the other qualified and representative organizations concerned.

It was reminded that the World Assembly of INBO in Debrecen gave mandate to the World Liaison Bureau to prepare INBO participation in the 5th World Water Forum of Istanbul and also consider dynamic partnerships on this occasion with the organizers of specific events. It also entrusted Messrs. Guy FRADIN and Victor DUKOVNY, as Governors of the World Water Council and Members of INBO World Liaison Bureau, and Jean-François DONZIER of the Permanent Technical Secretariat, to ensure permanent liaison with the Forum organizers.

□ REGARDING THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN IN PARTICULAR:

Vth General Assembly of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO)

The General Assembly examined the Network advances and activities covered since the meeting of Marrakech in 2005. The structure and functioning of the Network were introduced to participants who had a first contact with MENBO. Other specific topics were addressed such as: the development of the MENBO bureaus and General Assemblies, approval of candidates and new members, participation in international events, activities developed within projects on integrated water resources management, proposals for the development of future projects.

The General Assembly highlighted the strong and continuous implication of the Network in projects such as TWINBASIN^{xn}, MELIA or SPI-Water, in liaison with representatives from organizations that share objectives and projects in the region, such as GWP-Med and EMWIS for example.

MENBO annual general accounts for 2005 and 2006 were approved and the provisional budget for 2007 was presented. The increase in annual budgets shows a greater support from the Spanish government and collaborating organizations, and a greater participation in projects that have led to practical actions and exchanges of experiences between countries of the region.

The Assembly approved the proposal of two new members: the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSI) of Turkey and the Water and Irrigation Ministry of Jordan.

It is necessary to underline the quick development of MENBO. Since 2002 an important cooperation between basin organizations of the region has been achieved, and the Network already gathers 28 members from 13 Mediterranean countries, in addition to an important collaboration with international Mediterranean organizations, the European Commission and NGOs. During the statutory sessions, the participants were invited to promote participation of their countries in the Network, reminding that the registration to MENBO is free as the primary objective is to obtain an active participation of all the Mediterranean basin organizations and administrations in charge of water management with the joint objective of achieving mechanisms for integrated management at level of river basins.

In accordance with MENBO statutes, **Mr. Walter MAZZITTI (Italy), President of the « European Task Force on Water of the Middle East Peace Process** will take the Presidency of the Regional Network up to its next General Assembly in 2009.

It will be from now on Italy to head MENBO, taking over this responsibility from Morocco and previously Spain which allowed the initial and successful launching of the Network. The Italian Minister announced his will to develop actions for collaboration and cooperation between the Mediterranean countries as a continuation of the Spanish and Moroccan Presidencies.

The Assembly especially thanked D. Mohamed EL YAZGHI, former Minister for Regional Planning, Water and Environment, now State Minister of Morocco, for the excellent Presidency he has carried out since 2005. MENBO secretariat, its collaborators and INBO thanked Morocco for its efforts and dedication towards the Network. The Assembly particularly thanked the new Moroccan Minister for Energy, Water and the Environment and the State Secretary in charge of water for their reaffirmed support to MENBO in particular and to INBO in general.

Mr. BENBIBA (Morocco) and Mr. MORAGUES (Spain) were elected MENBO Vice-Presidents for the new period.

MENBO Permanent Technical Secretariat remains hosted by the Jucar River Basin Authority in Valencia, Spain, which was thanked for the efficiency of the work carried out in this organization.

Some proposals were given for the organization of the next General Assembly and Liaison Bureaus in 2008. The importance of the International Saragossa Exhibition 2008 whose main topic is Water and Sustainable Development was underlined, and the present countries were invited to participate in this important event.

During the different technical presentations, the participants also underlined a topic of prime importance for the Mediterranean region: the effect of climate change, water scarcity and drought in the Mediterranean region

It was reminded that climate change will have significant effects on water availability and will aggravate drought phenomena, affecting the Mediterranean areas that are already vulnerable and count on limited water resources. It is anticipated that these effects will have environmental and socioeconomic impacts that will have to be quickly dealt with strategic measures. In such a context, the compatibility of water uses with the environmental protection will be the key to drought prevention and management.

The problem of water scarcity and drought in the European and Mediterranean region is now a reality that affects a great number of countries. MENBO has facilitated different events and sessions for cooperation on this topic and participates in projects on the evaluation and application of joint solutions. The recent appointment of MENBO as observer in the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) of the WFD and its participation in the Euro-Mediterranean working group on water scarcity and drought are key elements to progress in this field.

The paper of the European Commission "Facing the challenge of water scarcity and drought in the European Union", published in July 2007, should be underlined as well as the proposal to develop a community strategy that deals with this problem. In such a context, MENBO can play an important role in the exchange of experiences and advances of the Members States with Mediterranean countries facing the same problems.

□ OTHER CONCLUSIONS

The Rome Conference was made aware of the specificities of islands which imply a particular approach and the establishment of specific reference frames, still widely inexistent, regarding water management and WFD implementation.

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 delegates thanked the Italian Ministry and Basin Authorities for having initiated this 5th European « EUROPE-INBO 2007 » conference, for their perfect organization and their very warm welcome in Rome.

Mr. Roberto GRAPPELLI, Secretary General of the Tiber Basin Authority (Italy) will chair the « EUROPE-INBO » group until its next plenary assembly in 2008.

The delegates cordially congratulated **Mr. Jacky COTTET, President of the French Rhone – Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency**, for the effectiveness with which he held the Presidency of the « EUROPE-INBO » Group in 2006/2007 and for the significant progress made in the structuring and extension of the partnership through the whole European Union and neighboring Countries, and especially for the success of the session on the Framework Directive, organized by « EUROPE-INBO » during the International Yellow River Forum in Dongying (China) on 18 October 2007.

The delegates retained with thanks the proposal from Rumania to organize the next « EUROPE-INBO » Conference in Autumn 2008.

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

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED IN ROME ON 9 NOVEMBER 2007.