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CEENBO
Central and Eastern European Network of Basin Organisations



SUEN
TURKISH WATER INSTITUTE

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OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

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The 10th conference of the "EUROPE-INBO" group, which was held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 17 to 19 October 2012, at the invitation of the Turkish Water Institute (SUEN), gathered 354 participants, representatives of national administrations and basin organizations as well as NGOs, companies and international organizations from 47 Countries (list of countries in the Annex).

The "EUROPE-INBO" group, created in Valencia, Spain, in 2003 by the European Basin Organizations of INBO for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), aims at enriching the implementation of water policies in Europe, including the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS), through their practical experience for supporting the Candidate Countries and disseminating the principles and tools of the European water directives, especially to the EU neighbouring countries in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and in the Mediterranean..

Within INBO, the Central and Eastern European Network of Basin Organizations (CEENBO), the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), and the new Network of Basin Organizations of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA - NBO), facilitate in their own region exchanges of experience and discussions on basin management in an enlarged European context.

The "EUROPE-INBO" group holds annual plenary assemblies: Valencia (Spain) in 2003, Krakow (Poland) in 2004, Namur (Belgium) in 2005, Megève (France) in 2006, Rome (Italy) in 2007, Sibiu (Romania) in 2008, Stockholm (Sweden) in 2009, Megève (France) in 2010 and Oporto (Portugal) in 2011.

The 10th "EUROPE-INBO 2012" international conference in Istanbul was organized around six successive round tables addressing the following issues:

- Water, food and energy nexus – the dilemmas, experiences, costs and benefits: WFD and Hydropower – Agro-environmental measures in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), etc.
- Cooperation with EECCA and Mediterranean Partner Countries on the implementation of the WFD principles and methods.
- Improve water governance in transboundary river basins, Bi and multilateral cooperation, etc.
- Adapt to challenges linked to climate change and prevent extreme phenomena: Implementation of the Floods Directive, drought risk reduction.
- Develop new approaches of river restoration and protection of water ecosystems: Hydro-morphology, Environmental flows, basin rehabilitation, inter-basin water transfers.
- Economic analysis, cost recovery under the WFD, value of ecosystems services, water resources use efficiency, involvement and solidarity of the users,

In addition, the participants discussed about the results of basin management at the 6th World Water Forum in Marseilles, France, and at the UN Rio+20 Conference.

65 papers were presented during the conference.

The EUROPE-INBO group members made recommendations to further improve water resources management in the European Union and in the Partner Countries, relying in particular on this experience.

River basin management is clearly the most appropriate local approach to manage water resources, allowing more consistency between the different sectors, including between water, energy, agriculture, and food and waterways transport and better integration between land management and water resources management to cope with present and future challenges, including those related to global change.

The WFD introduces a new and more effective governance of water resources and water ecosystems.

Countries have very different political and administrative organizations, which must be taken into account.

The effectiveness of public and private action implies to identify all local stakeholders involved in quantitative and qualitative water management and that their actions are coordinated in a systemic approach: States, Provinces-Regions-Landers, basin organizations, municipalities, local authorities, economic stakeholders and associations, etc.

The WFD requires basin management in all EU Member States and progress made in its implementation shows the advantage of this management method.

However, the articulation of the WFD with its "Daughter Directives" or with the basic measures of its annex A should be increased with the "Floods", "Marine Waters", "Renewable Energy" Directives, with the Common Agricultural Policy and the system of official aid to give any desired effectiveness to their consistent implementation.

For basins that have a large coastal area, good articulation with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is very important.

To achieve this, coordination is needed between the various administrative services, sometimes located in different ministries, which implement them, e.g. between the services that manage floods and drought plans and those which are directly in charge of implementing the WFD.

The drought and flood prevention and control plans should be incorporated in the WFD River Basin Management Plans.

The evaluation policy (fitness check) implemented by the European Commission which should lead to a "Blueprint" (pre-programmed blue paper) at the end of November 2012, already shows several areas for improvement: the need to reduce water demand by integrating efficiency requirements in water uses especially in buildings (public and private, apartment blocks or houses, industry) and agriculture, better regulations on drought and flood control, by strengthening the link between water planning and land use planning in particular, the clear definition of the cost recovery principle and the wider use of economic instruments, improving availability of quality information on water resources, especially when uncertainty increases.

As a whole, WFD implementation should be more practical and supporting documents (guides) should be more thorough to take account of the complexity of the Directives for facilitating their implementation by practitioners. The "Blueprint" should seek a simplification in the approach to complex problems and provide to the Member States, the clarifications needed for a more effective implementation of the WFD and water-related guidelines, for future planning exercises by 2027.

In practice, it is necessary to find a balance between protection and uses. Efficiency issues of water use, including limiting losses, reducing leaks, re-using treated wastewater should be assessed prior to the development of new Management Plans with a prospective vision aimed at preventing the decrease in the available resource and at water savings in all sectors.

Mechanisms should be improved to involve all the stakeholders actively working in effective implementation of River Basin Management Plans.

Despite the differences of understanding and implementation of the WFD between EU Member States, the Directive is recognized as having a crucial role in establishing effective, efficient and sustainable water management.

Effective water resources management must rely on (environmental, social, technical and economic) data and indicators which must allow reporting on the results of the implemented policies and programmes and also improving them to increase their effectiveness.

It is obvious that, for many water bodies, the initial status has not been correctly assessed, often for lack of information, and obtained by mere extrapolation of data coming from other water bodies, similar or near by. Moreover, the definition of water bodies varies considerably from one country to another and even between districts. Under these conditions, it will be difficult to make an evaluation and realistic comparisons.

Appreciating the results of the WFD implementation depends on the quality of the established information systems, a good number of which currently shows insufficiencies. Consequently, two questions arise: 1) how to make good observations of the water bodies, 2) which additional means can be used to improve the quality of these information systems, in the context of financial and budgetary crisis we know.

Thus, monitoring and information systems should be improved and adapted to the objectives and better compared between Member States, but the issue of their investment and operation costs arises in many situations..

The participants in the "EUROPE-INBO 2012" Conference consider that, at this stage, it is advisable to make efforts primarily on the application of the current water legislation and not to produce a new one.

In this respect, it is necessary to better take into account the fact that those who apply the regulations are usually not those who drafted them; this implies focusing on the goals of many local officials who are in charge of carrying out actions and subcontracting infrastructure work in each country, otherwise the “good status” target will not be achieved in 2015, nor in 2021 or even in 2027.

Recent socio-economic studies on water status and on the implementation of the directives underline that, with basic measures, we will hardly keep the initial status of water resources.

The high cost of implementing the WFD and "daughter" directives raises a problem in the current context of economic and budgetary crisis to achieve the set-out ambitious goals on schedule.

The goals of controlling non-point pollution and restoring degraded water ecosystems may not be achieved for many water bodies in any case for the 2015 or even later deadlines. New measures will be required implying additional means which are not currently planned or have been pushed back to the end of the 2021 - 2027 period.

Water management is related to a large number of sectoral policies of the European Union and cross-sectoral coordination is the only way to achieve sustainable water resources management in the future. A better integration of policies is needed, especially with the Common Agricultural Policy in the European Union. But more generally, this consistency must also be looked for with the energy policy, transport policy and regional planning.

This is particularly the case of the water, food and energy nexus.

It seems necessary to find a balance that allows both effective implementation of the Water Framework Directive and compliance with the objectives of renewable energy production that the European Union has set and the objectives of the CAP.

The "Good Status" of many water bodies, especially groundwater, will not be achieved without a significant strengthening of the agri-environmental measures and a “greening” of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The need for food security puts pressure on water resources, both in quantity – abstraction for irrigation - and quality - impacts of the use of fertilizers and pesticides. The efficiency of water use in agriculture should be promoted not only through taxes or fines, but also and above all through incentives.

Energy production is another problem which causes impacts on the environment and water resources, some of which are in competition with agricultural and environmental water needs. Compromise should be looked for and a prior understanding of the water - energy - food nexus is needed.

The existence and operation of weirs and large reservoirs for energy, agricultural or multiple uses are a major source of impairment of hydro-morphology of water bodies and a significant obstacle to the continuity of flows, needed for the survival of aquatic fauna, for the breeding cycle of migratory fish and for the circulation of sediments.

The development and operation of these structures must take into account the environmental objectives of the WFD, especially the requirements relating to the construction of new units, and minimize impacts on the resource and ecosystems, knowing that priority should be given to the improvement and modernization of the existing structures, enabling sites for the building of new reservoirs being restricted by the ecological protected areas in the EU.

Concession renewal should integrate the objectives of the drought and flood plans.

In particular, for reasons of consistency and overall management, the concession of a complete chain of hydropower structures on the same sub-basin river should be given to a sole operator for new concessions or for their renewal.

Each river basin must establish a suitable institutional framework for an integrated approach that will also be used for adaptation to climate change.

Discussions on water, energy and food should also be linked to the debate on adaptation to climate change, very early in the thinking about impact assessment, vulnerability and adaptation measures to be recommended.

It is necessary to develop new approaches to river restoration and protection of water ecosystems

The EU directives, the WFD in particular, have changed the game for the rehabilitation and protection of water ecosystems. The new EU policy introduced a more global process, integrated on a large scale.

The recent evaluation of River Basin Management Plans in EU countries showed significant pressures and impacts related to hydro-morphology (50% of river water bodies and 30% of lake water bodies are affected by significant hydro-morphological pressures).

At the same time, work of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) or Framework Programme (FP) research projects provide new knowledge on methods for assessing the hydro-morphology of water bodies, environmental flow and mitigation and restoration measures.

In recent years there has been a significant development in this field.

The first experience feedback on river restoration measures implemented in various EU Member States also revealed significant difficulties.

One of the most obvious barriers to this type of project is the right to intervene on riverside lands which are often private or to change their use, in conjunction with the right to land ownership. Legislative changes are to be considered according to the situation of each country.

There is also the difficulty of identifying the relevant and motivated institutions to implement such actions, particularly those related to ecological continuity of rivers (migratory fish and sediments).

The high number of barriers to ecological continuity to be removed (even if often of small sizes) leads to budgetary and cultural problems. Even when large subsidies are given, local stakeholders operating in these projects (e.g. association or local authority) face financial problems due to the high cost of the structures as compared to their relatively small budgets. Moreover, some of these old structures have a cultural, historical even sentimental value that we must take into account. It is thus necessary to develop specific financing and incentive tools as well as a participatory and cultural policy for these institutions for them to successfully implement such measures.

This is even truer when you are addressing riverside private property owners who often do not even live there.

It is necessary to pass from a specific approach to large-scale restoration projects, which imply planning mechanisms on appropriate scales such as for example in the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark, which consider multiple-target approaches aiming at controlling floods, protecting nature and improving the attractiveness of an area. The example of the Bassée Valley in France also opens up new opportunities for synergies between flood control and restoration, reconnection between water units.

But these projects are often limited by lack of knowledge, of practical examples and information or awareness of planners and managers. There is a strong need for knowledge and know-how in hydro-morphology of rivers, restoration and protection of water ecosystems. Much can be learned from countries that have experience in this field.

It is therefore strategic to develop and share information on best practices regarding hydro-morphology and restoration of rivers and wetlands.

This should include actions covering the following topics:

- Promotion of integrated plans for the restoration and protection of rivers and water ecosystems, especially by using instruments of the “bio-engineering” type, etc.;
- Greater public participation to achieve the European objectives;
- Dissemination of knowledge and experience to decision-makers and managers in an appropriate form that increases their understanding of the benefits of these practices;
- Increased involvement of basin organizations in European research, experimentation or sharing of experiences and in the corresponding programmes (REFORM, EUROSTAT HYMO, INTERREG LIFE, etc.);
- Better account taking of the quality of water ecosystems in land use planning, in the development of tourism, navigation, energy production, urban planning, agriculture;
- Improving the capacity of assessing the economic, social and environmental advantages of river restoration and of the protection of ecosystems,
- Establishing corridors along watercourses, where land use must be strongly regulated and controlled to prevent future risks.

As the characteristics of water bodies vary much from one area to another, these projects must take them into account and be planned at the suitable level.

EU cooperation with Partner Countries from the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia for applying the WFD principles and methods should continue and be strengthened

The experience gained in the European Union with the implementation of the WFD and other EU directives on water and tools developed for this concern are interesting not only the Candidate Countries, but also other Partner Countries of the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and the Mediterranean, which could consider adjustments in their own institutional, geo-climatic and socio-economic situation, through enhanced cooperation.

In addition, some parts of transboundary water basins of the “WFD International Districts” are located in neighbouring countries, not members of the European Union. Specific cooperation schemes should be developed, pursued and implemented between all the riparian countries of each of these basins.

Recognizing, on the one hand, the interest of the WFD principles and methods for other regions, and on the other, the sharing of some transboundary water bodies with neighbouring countries of the EU, community cooperation with Partner Countries from the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia is to be pursued and increased.

In particular, this cooperation should prioritize topics of dialogue and the management of transboundary surface and groundwater with the support of regional institutions, the strengthening of national information systems and their harmonization with international reporting mechanisms, the training of managers or planners of water resources and the participation of users, local authorities and associations.

It is therefore important that cooperation between countries be supported for:

- Facilitating a common approach to challenges and problems, with the support of shared information and experience transfers between riparian countries;
- Establishing suited cooperation and dialogue frameworks which guarantee better management of surface and ground water resources;

- Developing common tools and practical measures for managing water resources and ecosystems, with means to implement them in practice.

Direct twinning agreements between basin organizations located in the European Union on the one hand, and in neighbouring regions on the other have shown their advantage, especially within the “TwinBasins” project which should be reactivated.

State to State twinning arrangements, initiated by the European Commission for enlargement, and since then expanded, not only to candidate countries, but also to all interested partner countries of the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and of the Mediterranean, have proven highly effective and should be continued and strengthened.

Water governance in transboundary basins should be improved especially in the international districts created for the implementation of the EU-WFD and between countries, parties to the “Water Convention”

Transboundary waters should be managed in an integrated manner which requires cooperation agreements signed by riparian countries to establish the conditions for appropriate governance, based on mutual confidence, a common understanding of the basin problems, based on available and shared accurate data and analysis, with the involvement of stakeholders.

Many transboundary basins of surface and ground waters have not to this day a legal and institutional framework to enable common governance (consultation, cooperation and coordination) between the stakeholders on transboundary water resources.

The methods used for this purpose are now well known and disseminated, especially thanks to the handbooks published in 2010 on transboundary aquifer systems and in 2012 on the transboundary basins of rivers and lakes.

Progress has been recorded in transboundary cooperation through the signing of basin agreements between riparian countries or sometimes through the establishment of international commissions, but where they exist, their mandate is limited and they have still too little capacity.

The participants in the conference wish for increasing support to International Commissions, either existing or being created, in all their tasks of exchange, coordination and consistency of targets and timetables.

Up to now, 11 Member States of the European Union have ratified the UN convention on international watercourses.

The UN resolution on transboundary aquifers strengthens the framework for cooperation between the countries concerned. An action should be taken to give it a practical effect, especially in the light of the work done through the UNESCO’s ISARM programme and of the thinking made by the World Water Forum in Marseilles.

The 1992 “Water Convention” and the Protocol on Water and Health of 1999 are applied in the Pan-European region to the countries parties to the UNECE and to the Protocol.

The Parties decided to open the Convention to non-European countries which would wish so: it is advisable that this amendment be ratified as soon as possible by the Parties and new countries are invited to adhere to this convention.

The Pan-European region has thus effective instruments to achieve the goals of good transboundary water management between the countries which ratified them. The countries outside the UNECE zone, especially the Mediterranean countries, could take advantage of the experiments resulting from the implementation of the Water Convention and of its intergovernmental framework to increase their transboundary cooperation. The activities carried

out within this framework can usefully be used as a document to guide countries which are parties to the UNECE Convention for better governance.

In the European Union, in too many basin management plans for transboundary rivers, the programmes of measures only keep a national dimension, the major stakes found in the whole basin not being always prioritized by all the riparian countries, including for important stakes such as flood control. This issue related to the accountability of each Member State to the European Commission in obtaining "Good Status" should be reviewed to ensure the development of cooperation in each transboundary river basin.

Adaptation to the challenges related to global change (climate and socio-economy) and to the prevention of extreme phenomena, the implementation of the Floods Directive and to the reduction of the risk of drought

The evolution of the populations, of economic balances and climate change are forcing States and basin organizations to start prospective steps and thus improve scientific knowledge to make medium and long-term projections in a context of great uncertainty and increasing vulnerability.

Reviewing existing knowledge should help highlight the shortcomings and gaps to be filled by appropriate programmes to collect information or applied research.

Climate change projections and scenarios should be quickly made available to improve the future River Basin Management Plans.

Finally, we should take into account the significant social and economic changes foreseen in the medium term. Population growth and migrations towards the coasts and cities will have an impact that has to be taken into account in the Management Plans.

It is advisable to assess the direct and indirect pressures of climate change and their relationship with the impact of human activities on water resources. We should also detect the signals that show that climate change is underway and build an appropriate network for monitoring the relevant indicators related to the effects of climate change on water. Reference sites should be selected or developed for this purpose.

Potentially all issues included in the WFD targets will be impacted by these changes: water availability (surface and groundwater), water demand, intensity and frequency of extreme phenomena (floods, drought), water quality including temperature, salinity, concentration of contaminants.

Member States and basin authorities should consider the potential effects of the proposed measures by a "climate checking" of the Management Plans. All this work is done on a case-by-case basis, as no model is valid for all regions.

From now on, it is necessary to work both on improving water resources and reducing water demand!

"No regret" measures such as leak detection, practices improving water use effectiveness, recycling, non conventional water use (treated wastewater re-use), groundwater recharge, search for adapted crop varieties resistant to stress, etc., should be promoted at EU level and beyond, by providing technical, legal and economic frameworks allowing their development under strict sanitary and environmental conditions. Water efficiency in agriculture should especially be improved and ensure adequacy between type of crops, increase in temperature and water availability. The South-Mediterranean countries can provide their experience in this field to the Northern countries.

Increasing the natural capability of water ecosystems by restoring their functionalities to limit the impact of climatic change should be strongly considered in adaptation strategies.

Discussions on adaptation to global change and climate change in particular, should start as soon as possible for preparing the second phase of river basin management plans 2015-2021, for analyzing their effects and vulnerabilities and for defining measures to be recommended in a context of great uncertainty. In this context, the choice of appropriate indicators to assess the "water footprint" of different uses and improve their efficiency in relation to the issues of water scarcity is fundamental.

To cope with the challenges related to global change (climate and socio-economy) and to the resulting uncertainty for the future, policies should be adaptive enough to allow flexibility to changes, and the experiments that are started should encourage the building of the new institutional and individual capacities that are required

The WFD may be used as a toolbox for addressing adaptation to climate change in areas at risk to reduce the impacts of droughts and flood risk.

To achieve these objectives, it is essential to develop new adaptation skills in the basin organizations to properly manage climate-related risks and vulnerabilities.

Involving the stakeholders early in the process can improve the acceptance of measures, increase their efficiency, minimize conflicts and maximize synergies in adaptation plans. Effective communication must be organized at all levels of the basin. This may require training, the acquisition of professional skills and the organization of forums to enable knowledge transfer and expand the audience for public participation.

Prioritizing water uses during drought episodes should be considered in the River Basin Management Plans so that local authorities can react effectively.

It is necessary to establish adaptive policies to manage the socio-economic and climate changes in a context of increasing uncertainty.

Examples of good practices from experiments in basins should be the basis for building new capacities in the organizations in charge of water management. Staff training shall especially aim at developing scenarios, using models and forecasting.

The WFD consultation process can be validly used to disseminate knowledge on the issue, especially to key stakeholders.

At the level of transboundary basins, it is important to develop a joint adaptation strategy between all riparian countries to avoid inconsistencies between national measures and to optimize the benefits of cooperation. The work done by the UNECE in 8 transboundary basins and the forthcoming creation by UNECE and INBO of a network of transboundary and national pilot basin organizations on adaptation to climate change could give support to this issue.

Problems specific to water scarcity and droughts

New practices to adapt to droughts and prevent water shortages that, with climate change, will affect a large part of the European territory and population are to be promoted quickly.

These practices should also facilitate greater "sustainability/resilience" of irrigated and rain-fed agriculture, by improving the security of agricultural farms in particular through more flexible production systems: it will be necessary to reduce water consumption and increase the efficiency of all uses.

Indeed, climate change will exacerbate the structural problems that lead to water shortages in some European countries. The River Basin Management Plans required by the WFD are the way to address this issue in a participatory manner and according to inclusive dynamics.

Achieving good groundwater quantitative status may request in some regions significant rebalancing of water abstractions as compared to the capacities for aquifer recharge.

Measures to be taken may include incentive economic instruments such as progressive pricing.

Given the high degree of uncertainty in climate change projections and the growing pressure on water resources, it is essential that hydrometric networks be reinforced to anticipate droughts and that the causes of shortage be analyzed, i.e. for monitoring water demand and its long-term trends as compared to water supply possibilities.

The main area for action is optimizing water demands for irrigation which usually account for the largest fraction of the total water demand in water-scarce regions.

Research and development should be furthered regarding the water saving issue, including through the establishment of water efficiency standards in the building and agricultural sectors.

To address water scarcity and drought risks in the European Union and neighbouring regions, which climate change effects are likely to exacerbate, river basin management should promote the use of specific tools such as:

- Drought management plans and measures, focusing on demand management and on the promotion of water saving systems;
- Indicator systems to monitor the impacts produced by the decrease in available water, and to determine the vulnerability of water bodies and dependent ecosystems;
- Early warning systems, risk and vulnerability maps to help managers making decisions;
- Specific monitoring networks to determine aquifer and wetland levels during drought episodes.

Specific problems related to flooding

Future changes in the intensity and frequency of extreme events combined with changes in land use will cause an increase in flood risk in Europe. The Floods Directive shares many similarities with the WFD, e.g. a cyclical approach to risk assessment, preparation of management plans and consultation process.

It is necessary to coordinate both directives on a basin scale, especially transboundary basins where flood risk is regarded as common by the riparian countries.

Climate change might lead to more extreme phenomena with heavy and sudden rainfalls, a pluviometry more concentrated over short periods, snowfall episodes followed by rainy episodes locally leading to massive water inputs and more storms accentuating, with the rising of sea level, the risks of marine flooding. It is also necessary to take into account flood risks in urban areas by overflow of saturated sewers.

Risk assessment already requires to carefully take past floods into account.

In addition, States must establish a strict doctrine in urban planning in order to forbid or limit any building extension in a flood plain. It is also necessary to assess the impacts of soil sealing on runoff during heavy rainfall periods.

The provisions of flood risk protection plans must be imperatively integrated into urban planning documents.

Warning systems and informing the public in times of crisis should be improved by using new technologies (automated system for calls, SMS and e-mails). It is necessary to develop meteorological monitoring with more accurate weather forecasts available on websites with real-time monitoring.

In towns at risk, it is necessary to establish local preparedness plans and foresee the investments needed to protect the threatened populations and properties.

We must raise peoples' awareness, including young people, to risk and prevention: conferences are to be organized, guidance documents are to be drafted.

Under the Water Convention, the UNECE published in 2009 a "guide on water and adaptation to climate change" which should be promoted.

In September 2010, the conference on "Water and Mountains" in Megève - France recommended increasing solidarity between the upstream and downstream parts of a basin, based on a detailed analysis of the consequences of climate change on the hydrology of large European rivers.

The EUROPE-INBO group supports the steps taken and especially the analysis that will show whether the implemented solutions can be applied in other regions.

In particular, the participants support the UN initiative of a Pact for Water Safety, the introduction of a "Water-Energy" package in the negotiations on climate and the creation by 2015 of a Global "Water-Energy" Fund, devoted partly to "Water for Food" and partly to "Water for Health".

Economic analysis, cost recovery in the WFD, valuation of ecosystem services, efficiency of water uses, participation and solidarity among users

The WFD gives a major role to economic analysis in the river basin management process.

The first assessment of River Basin Management Plans drew some preliminary lessons learned regarding economic analysis.

The great variability of the level of ambition shown in the various basins (given objectives as compared to the initial status assessed in 2009) resulted in wondering about the realism of the assumptions chosen both for assessing the cost of the measures and for appreciating their disproportionate nature.

Most Member States have provided relevant information on cost recovery in water supply and sewerage services for households and industry; but some gaps remain regarding agriculture for example.

We could however underline that Member States use different methods and that the details or transparency of the provided information should be better harmonized.

It is necessary to deepen the analysis on how subsidies were considered, especially about the "three T rule" of the OECD (Tariffs, Transfer and Taxes).

The deficiencies noted in the capacity to assess environmental costs also concern the assessment of the expected benefits, or avoided costs, of achieving good status.

One major field of improvement is certainly the assessment of Environmental and Resource (E&R) costs, as strong lacks appeared in terms of methodologies and data availability. Most Member States provided limited and often too academic results of the first estimations of E&R costs in River Basin Management Plans.

Hopefully, in recent years interesting examples emerged in the economic valuation of ecosystem services that could lead to interesting methodologies for estimating E&R costs and for assessing the payment for these services.

At present, River Basin Organizations are requesting some clarification under the CIS on cost recovery and definitions of environmental and resource costs (knowing that a CIS guide already

exists but is insufficient). One approach to this could be to develop good practices for Art. 9 implementation.

As for the cost-effectiveness analysis, there is still a high uncertainty about the effectiveness of the measures, especially the measures in hydro-morphology and non-point pollution in agriculture. The issues of where to best locate actions as well as the uncertainty about the impacts of the combinations of measures are challenging. The analysis of the effects of the combination of measures or the balancing of scenarios is still very difficult.

More generally, as the methods used are different from one country to another, participants of the conference pledge for an exchange of experiences and practical application examples of criteria for effectiveness of measures, disproportionate costs, exemptions and extension of delays and impact on the water price. The catalogue of measures of the Scheldt comparing the cost and effectiveness of measures by sector and types of substances concerned in an international district is an interesting example.

It is essential to reinforce the practical nature of the economic studies to make them more able to weigh in the decision-making processes, and for them to be more communicating than academic, especially in clearly explaining things to the users.

WFD implementation has a significant cost and requires a financial effort implying in many situations an increase in the water price. In the current context of economic crisis in the Union, this raises the problem of “disproportionate costs” (article 4.4 and 4.5 of the directive), related to the acceptability of this additional cost by users and by the Member States and local Authorities.

It is clear that reliable (public and private) financing is the key to success of the implementation of Programmes of Measures.

For this purpose, the European regulatory framework relating to State official aids should be adapted in order to subsidize, on public funds, the “environmental services” and relevant measures aiming at improving water management (treatment of non-point pollution, etc.). This adaptation of the economic instruments will be probably a factor for success of effective WFD implementation.

The costs are likely to be higher than the financial resources that can be mobilized. Many Member States have defined progressive objectives and spread expenses over two or three successive Programmes of Measures, and, in several cases, it seems that the heaviest financial charges have been postponed to the 2017-2021 period, which can undoubtedly be a bad signal to the various stakeholders involved.

Beyond what could be interpreted as a device to postpone deadlines, it is undeniable that the high cost of implementing the WFD and “daughter” directives raises a problem in the current context of economic and budgetary crisis to achieve the ambitious targets set in the originally planned timetable.

The goals of controlling non-point pollution and restoring degraded water ecosystems will not be achieved for many water bodies in any case for the 2015 or even later deadlines. New measures will be required implying additional means which are not currently planned or have been pushed back to the end of the 2021 - 2027 period.

It is also necessary to organize solidarity among citizens and local authorities, to make water supply and sanitation services economically accessible to all people, especially the poorest. Experience sharing regarding initiatives and practices of the various countries (equalization, social pricing, mutual aid funds, etc) should be encouraged.

It is important that the available decision-making supporting tools for water management are better promoted and disseminated.

A workshop entitled “Tools to support and improve Integrated Water Resources Management: STRATEAU and AQUATOOL. A Mediterranean Perspective” was organized by the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO) and the Technical University of Valencia (UPV) in collaboration with the Water Embassy and the contribution of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) for the Mediterranean.

These tools are adequate instruments to enrich academic education.

The participants underlined that the implementation of such tools is an important and indispensable support for water managers and of special value in the Mediterranean region, very sensitive to water scarcity conditions and which needs to implement the most effective water resources management.

These tools can facilitate integrated water resources exploitation and planning, water use accountability by highlighting the urban, ecological and socio-economic factors and their evolution. Both tools can be used in a complementary way.

Cooperation between basin organizations in the EU and neighbouring countries is very useful for exchange between professionals working in very different institutional, technical or economic contexts, especially on their practice in managing the data required for drafting and monitoring Management Plans or multi-party dialogue supported by decision-making tools. This type of cooperation between peers is clearly beneficial to both EU Members States and neighbouring countries because of the variety of situations encountered that allow everyone to benefit from its strengths.

Financial support for this cooperation provided by the European Commission has been significant through its research programmes, twinning arrangements (including "Twin Basin") or the providing of reporting tools; however, new mechanisms based on decentralized cooperation rather than bidding would be useful for mobilizing, in these know-how transfer projects, practitioners working in basin organizations rather than consultants who are more theorists than practitioners of the WFD.

Acting towards decentralization

The participants agreed on the fact that the success of the WFD implementation is mostly based on the mobilization of local authorities.

Indeed, local authorities are usually the developers of many recommended measures. We should thus focus our efforts on the mobilization and involvement of municipalities, regions, provinces, “landers”, etc., according to their roles and responsibilities in each country.

Similarly, many local professional organizations, associations or collaborative bodies (including trade unions, cooperatives, farmers’ groups in agriculture) can be effective vectors for implementing decentralized actions for achieving the WFD targets.

In most cases, recovering good status will pass by the implementation of a “combination of various measures”. At the same time, the involved stakeholders are varied. In such a context, local adjustments of Management Plans and Programmes of Measures are essential. These local tools allow gathering the stakeholders and giving visibility over a few years on all the measures planned in the river basin. But such procedures take a long time to be implemented. It is necessary to progress to solve some specific problems especially through “contracts” (“contracts of industrial branch”, river, bay, estuary and aquifer contracts, fertilization or land application programmes, or reduction of pesticides in particular).

Participation of stakeholders, young people and of the general public:

Public involvement will be crucial to achieve the objectives of the WFD and other water directives. Many Europeans are still not aware of the challenges facing the future of water. Communication towards decision-makers and the general public must be significantly strengthened to create true awareness.

In that context, the involvement of stakeholders remains crucial as we should give necessary explanations to the consumers, stakeholders and decision-makers to make the stakes understandable through objective data shared by all of them.

School children's education-awareness to water issues and the experiments of "Youth Parliaments for Water" have been successful where they were developed. It is necessary to encourage their development in the basins because young people are the most affected by the lack of drinking water and sanitation, but they are also current and future users of water resources and those that tomorrow will implement the recommended solutions.

Initiatives such as the World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPM), established during the World Water Forum of Marseilles, must be encouraged because they will allow young people becoming an interested party in water governance. In the long term, it is advisable to give formal room to youth representatives in basin authorities. Similarly, the "water classes" system should be expanded.

The participants suggest that a working group in charge of thinking about participation strategies should be established to increase actual participation in river basin management (related to Article 14 of the WFD).

The recommendations from the European process of the Forum in Marseilles must be followed by practical actions.

The Regional European process of the 6th World Water Forum highlighted the main challenges that Europe will have to face.

The European Commission's assessment of the legislative framework related to water through the "Fitness Check" exercise and the revision provided through the "Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources", due in November 2012, was hailed as a major initiative to be used as best as possible.

For EU countries, the "project to save water in Europe" ending in 2020 aims to ensure quality water in sufficient quantities for all legitimate uses in the context of climate change.

Participants in the Forum's Regional European process especially reiterated the need to manage water in an integrated manner at river basin level, taking into account all uses, environments, risks and all kinds of pollution.

In this regard, the commitments made at the Astana Pan-European Ministerial Conference (AWA/UNECE) and during the Forum, such as the "World Pact for Better Basin Management" promoted by INBO, the "Handbook on Transboundary River Basin Management"; the signing of agreements between riparian countries (Kura, Tisza) are encouraging for the integrated management of transboundary rivers.

Participants in this European process expressed their belief that a system of incentive prices is a good lever to promote the integration of water-related policies. It is essential to establish sustainable financing for the management of water resources and community water services.

It is recommended to promote an interface between science and policy, for, in particular, better alignment between research projects and users and water managers' needs.

The ad hoc activity launched under the WFD Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) can be used as a basis to reinforce this two-way communication between science and policy contributing

to better adequacy of science to the needs for water management and better account taking of existing knowledge by the decision makers.

Given the shorter and shorter deadlines, we should speed up the dissemination of new knowledge and research results to basin managers and field practitioners, by strengthening programmes facilitating this transfer such as "Research to Market "(RTOM), supported by the European Commission.

It is particularly important to encourage and support projects that aim to develop an understanding of the impacts of climate change in a given region (e.g. mountain with the Alp-Water-Scarce project, FACCE-JPI research project for agriculture).

Adaptation strategies could usefully follow the recommendations given in guides, reports, papers and guidance documents on the issue (European 2020 strategy and initiative for resource efficiency in Europe, guidelines for water adaptation to climate change), published in recent years by the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, UNECE or the Alpine Convention, among others.

Under the "European Trialogue" (between ministers, parliamentarians and local authorities), organized during the Forum, it was deemed necessary that the EU and Member States maintain a high level of financial support for solidarity with the partner countries and support the development of decentralized solidarity financing mechanisms for access to drinking water and sanitation for all. Innovative arrangements already exist in several countries and can inspire water utility managers, local authorities and European basin organizations to create similar mechanisms, with the support of the European platform for promoting 1% solidarity for water managed by Solidarité Eau Europe (Solidarity Water Europe - SEE).

"World Pact for Better Basin Management"

To date, the "World Pact for Better Basin Management", launched by INBO at the World Water Forum in Marseilles in March 2012, has been very successful and 123 Organizations from all over the world have already signed it. We must continue to promote the "Pact" among all INBO Member and Observer Organizations that have not signed it yet, to present an excellent report at our next World General Assembly of the Network to be held from 12 to 16 August 2013 in Fortaleza, Ceara in Brazil.

New Permanent Technical Secretary of MENBO:

The Permanent Technical Secretariat of MENBO announced to the EUROPE-INBO Conference the designation of Dr. Teodoro Estrela Monreal, Head of the Hydrological Planning Office of the Júcar River Basin Authority (JRBA) in Valencia (Spain), as new Permanent Technical Secretary of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations. His predecessor, Mr. Javier Ferrer Polo, was appointed new Water Commissioner of the Júcar River Basin Authority. Present MENBO Members thank him for his successful work in the past years and will continue collaborating with him in the future in his new function.

This "EUROPE-INBO 2012" conference was a new important step in the assessment of WFD implementation, in making proposals and recommendations to improve it, especially for the next cycle of the 2015-2021 River Basin Management Plans.

The participants thanked Portugal, and especially Mr. Antonio GUERERRO DE BRITO, for having fulfilled with determination and success the Presidency of EUROPE-INBO group during the year 2011/2012.

Professor Ahmet Mete SAATCI (Turkey) was elected President of the EUROPE-INBO Group for the coming year until the next conference to be held in 2013.

The Delegates thanked the Turkish Authorities, the Turkish Water Institute (SUEN) and other Turkish administrations for their excellent hospitality and for the perfect organization of this 10th Conference.

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