

# International Network of Basin Organizations - INBO

## 7<sup>th</sup> EUROPE-INBO Group Conference

19 - 21 August 2009 - Stockholm - Sweden



EUROPE-INBO

**This year, the yearly EUROPE-INBO Group conference took place within the World Water Week of Stockholm and was part of the official events of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union.**

Jointly organized by INBO and the Swedish District Authorities, it gathered 131 participants from 24 countries during 3 days, with the presence of the European Commission.

The conference was opened by Mr. Björn Sjöberg (Sweden), Director of the "Skagerrak and Kattegat" District Authority, and by Mr. Ovidiu Gabor (Romania), President of EUROPE-INBO 2008.

**The conference dealt with three topics: Management Plans, Climate Change and Programs of Measures.**

The District Authorities are indeed currently facing the same stakes in

all the European countries: implementing the very first cycle of the Management Plans and Programs of Measures which must be adopted before the end of the year and integrating climate change into water resources management.

In addition to the introductory speeches, a significant part of the program was dedicated to exchanges in round tables.

### MANAGEMENT PLANS AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Mr. Patrick Weingertner (Rhine-Meuse Water Agency, France) introduced the topic and presented the French participative approach and more particularly that used in his Basin, with the sending of one questionnaire to all the French families, accompanied by a communication campaign (local TV, radio, newspapers), local information meetings and a Website dedicated to the consultation.

The rate of reply however remains relatively low and it is thus still necessary to increase awareness. The public consultation led however to modify the draft Management Plans and the results were communicated to the public.

Messrs. Kálmán Papp (Hungary), Håvard Hornnæs (Norway) and Anthony Mc Nally (Ireland) then presented the approach used in their basins.

Work in round tables, reported by Mr. Bo Sundström, Sweden, underlined that public participation requires time and resources which should not be underestimated. The French approach was often quoted as a very good practice but also as too expensive for some countries. Some limit themselves to the use of Internet to inform and consult the public, but the participants agreed to saying that this is not enough: it is necessary to use the local newspapers and to organize public debates.

For Transboundary International Districts, the added value of International Commissions was underlined. But it is still necessary to increase the coordination of the measures by the riparian countries and to agree on the same economic model (disproportionate costs, exemptions, ...).

### CLIMATE CHANGE: CHALLENGES FOR WATER MANAGEMENT

After a scientific introduction by Professor Sten Bergström (Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute), three basin experiments were presented: Mrs. Wanda Zevenboom (Netherlands), Mr. Juan Jose Moragues (Spain) and Mr. Jean-Marie Wauthier (Wallonia, Belgium).

The round tables led to the following conclusions, reported by Mrs. Daniela Radulescu, Romania: the costs of the adaptation to climate change will be lower than those of non-adaptation and it is important to act as soon as the Program of Measures 2009-2015; the Marine Strategy, the Floods Directive and the Framework Directive would gain from better

coordination especially between the responsible administrations and at the European level (CIS); expertise is lacking for taking into account climate change in planning; it is necessary to develop meteorological modelling, specify orientations and carry out case studies. Europe should be a leader in this approach.

### ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAMS OF MEASURES

Mrs. Maria Brättemark of the European Commission estimated that the economic analyses presented by the Member States remain rather disappointing: many draft Management Plans do not refer to the cost-effectiveness analysis and only 60% of them tackle the subject of pricing.

Three district experiments were presented by Mr. Peter Pollard (Scotland), Mr. Hans Christian Karsten (Denmark) and Mrs. Geraldine Aubert (France).

The discussions, reported by Mr. Mario Cerutti (Maas International Commission) underlined the difficulty in finding the best combination of measures, for non-point pollution in particular.

Exemptions are often needed and not only when there is disproportionate cost. The polluter-pays principle should be better applied in agriculture and hydropower. Measures should be initiated at governmental level.

Many Basin Organizations estimate that their financing instruments are not suitable and that it would be necessary to develop case studies on this matter on the European scale.

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Mrs. Ann-Louise Månsson, Swedish Water Director, new President of EUROPE-INBO 2009

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They fear that there is not sufficient stakeholders' appropriation at local level, that the effects of the measures are insufficient, that there are interferences with other European programs (renewable energies, ...): it is necessary to find a good balance with the other environmental objectives and to put the Programs of Measures on the political agenda in order to solve controversies.

**On the whole, 17 papers were presented.**

The exchanges continued in a more informal way during a dinner-cruise in Stockholm archipelago, offered by the Swedish District Authorities.

**During the closing ceremony, Romania transmitted the Presidency of EUROPE-INBO Group to Sweden for the year to come.**

Mrs. Ann-Louise Månsson, Water Director of the Swedish Ministry of the Environment was handed the **EUROPE-INBO** symbol by Mr. Vasile Pintilie and Mr. Ovidiu Gabor, respectively Director General and Deputy Director General of Apele Romane (National Water Administration of Romania).

During the official conclusion of work, Mr. Jean-François Donzier, INBO Permanent Technical Secretary, underlined the stakes for the European Basin Organizations.

He reminded that huge work has been done since 2000, but important challenges are remaining to achieve the objectives of the Framework Directive.

110 River Basin Districts have been established across the European Union, Switzerland and Norway.

40 are Transboundary River Basin Districts which cover more than 60% of the territory of the EU, making international coordination one of the most significant issue and challenge for the WFD implementation.

To conclude his speech, he declared: "The gained experience shows that this new basin approach has real advantages! From now on, it is possible to progress towards better basin management in the European Union: we will to do it!"

Mrs. Maria Brättemark reminded the expectations of the European Commission and Mrs. Ann-Louise Månsson, Swedish Water Director, presented the priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union (climate, marine environment, biodiversity, eco-efficient economy, Strategy for the Baltic Sea).

The conclusions of the conference will be reported to the Strategic Coordination Group and to the European Water Directors.

The participants thanked our Swedish partners for their very good organization and their warm welcome.

This conference took place at a key moment of the development of Management Plans by the European Basin Organizations.

**You can find all the documents on INBO website.**

### THE 5 SWEDISH RIVER BASIN DISTRICTS



Sweden is divided into 21 counties ("Länsstyrelsen"), each one directed by a Prefect representing the State. Before the WFD, water was managed on a county scale. In 2004, Sweden adopted basin management and subdivided its territory in 5 River Basin Districts ("Vattendistrikt").

In each district, a county was designated as the authority responsible for the WFD, in charge of formulating the Management Plan and Program of Measures. The District Authorities ("Vattenmyndigheterna") are coordinated by the Swedish Ministry of the Environment.

Public participation is organized through the Water Council ("Vattenråd") gathering the municipalities, farmers, industries, associations for environmental protection, organizations of fishermen.

Sweden shares 3 transboundary districts with Norway and Finland.

The Baltic Sea is much polluted especially by eutrophication. The implementation of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea presented by the European Commission in June 2009 is one of the priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the EU. Sweden hopes that this step can be used as a model for other regional seas, such as the Mediterranean or the Black Sea.



Mrs. Maria Brättemark of the European Commission

**In-depth assessment**

- To follow up on issues identified in 2007 WFD Implementation report
- Inform the development of the reporting format for first RBMPs
- Provide information on how to improve implementation of economic tools in WFD
- Inform the development of compliance checking approach
- Looked as water service and use definitions, cost recovery, base-line and cost-effectiveness...

**"FOR FACILITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE"**