



To: INBO Technical Permanent Secretariat / 9<sup>th</sup> World General Assembly INBO

Presenter:

Bart Fokkens, Chairman European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR)

Email: [wetlandman@planet.nl](mailto:wetlandman@planet.nl)

Mobile: +31651216467

Presentation:

### RESTORING RIVERS IN EUROPE: Celebrating Successes and Addressing Challenges!

The EU assessment of the Member States *River Basin Management Plans* shows that there is a fundamental weakness on the implementation of the EU water legislation with conflicting EU policies. This hinders the implementation of the *Water Framework Directive*. Moreover the plans lack an ambition in taking measures to achieve good ecological status. The EU *Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources* emphasises a number of key themes which include: improving land use, addressing water pollution, increasing water efficiency and resilience, and improving governance by those involved in managing water resources.

The *Blueprint* states that more integrated approaches, i. g. by climate mainstreaming in different policy fields. And crosscutting solutions can improve the implementation of the *Water Framework Directive* and reduce hydro-morphological pressure in our river basins by restoring river continuity, for instance by using green infrastructure, particularly by natural water retention measures like wetland restoration and fish passes should be standard practice. This can also reduce the vulnerability floods and droughts. The *Common Agricultural Policy* can take up the green infrastructure by buffer strips for mitigation and preventing pressure from agriculture. While the restoration of riparian areas, wetlands and floodplains to retain water, can support biodiversity and soil fertility. Which actually means that the EU water policies aim for mainstreaming river restoration. And the objective of the 5<sup>th</sup> European River Restoration Conference is to support this.

#### Key messages

1. **Green Infrastructure;**  
River restoration as part of ensuring green infrastructure is a key means to help reduce and counter the impacts of land and water use and provides the basis for resilient and sustainable water resource management.
2. **Integrated approach;**  
Sectoral impacts on water resources are much wider than just water quality impacts related to agriculture, which have a recognized strong impact, and the water policies needs to consider a multi-sectoral and more clearly integrated approach if the correct measures, including green infrastructure, are to be put in place.
3. **Knowledge sharing;**  
There is a wealth of existing experience and knowledge from practical implementation of river restoration. This must play a key role in developing and implementing Integrated River Basin Management. Networks and related projects tasked with brokering knowledge and bridging science practice and science policy gaps must continue to be supported to achieve this.

Lelystad, 22 July 2013.

Bart Fokkens.