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Editorial

In previous editions we reported about the foreseen evaluation of the European Water Framework Directive ('Fitness check'). To accompany and inform this process, the European Environment Agency (EEA) has produced a report on the state of Europe's water that was recently published.

Striking news in the status report is that, only and still, around 40% of surface waters are in a good ecological status. With the main significant pressures on surface water bodies, hydro-morphological pressures (40%) diffuse pollution sources (38%), particularly from agriculture, and atmospheric deposition (38%), particularly mercury, followed by point pollution sources (18%) and water abstraction (7%).

Very recent this report was followed by a report of the World Fish Migration Foundation with the title 'Removing tens of thousands of obsolete dams in Europe will bring life back to rivers'. And a new initiative called *Dam Removal Europe* aims to start an era of dam removal.

These two reports, both available on ECRR's website www.ecrr.org, present

it clear that river restoration is still a must, but also that if hydro-morphological measures are taken, nature can remarkably fast recover.

This all means that river restoration is still needed, even more than ever. Fortunately, the content of this ECRR Newsletter shows that the river restoration and river management communities are more, and more together on the move for this. The articles about the IS Rivers 2018 Conference and the GWP-CEE Summer School 2018 'Towards Agenda 2030' witness a real drive by the youth and the science. Then the articles of the winner of the UK River Prize 2018 'Hill to Levels', the French river continuity restoration approach and the Yecla de Yeltes Dam Removal, in Spain prove that the (best) practices are available.

The DriDanube Project article on the 'Drought Risk in the Danube region' describes an advanced approach for monitoring, early warning and impact assessments of droughts for the development of a strategy to improve drought emergency response.

A number of informative announcements are in this issue highlighted as well: The World Rivers Day on the 23rd of September, a handbook presentation 'From sea to source 2.0' on river connectivity restoration, and a call for cooperation on knowledge about all aspects of riparian vegetation by the COST CONVERGES Action. We want to remark the 16th EUROPE-INBO 2018 International Conference on the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive will be held in Sevilla, Spain and finally the international river restoration event calendar is updated extensively.

Well, enjoy the read and we are looking forward to meeting you.

Bart Fokkens,
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Dutch – ECRR Delegation IS Rivers Conference Gala Dinner, June 2018, Lyon © IS Rivers



An impression of the IS Rivers 2018 Conference and ECRR sessions on 4 to 8 June in Lyon France

Introduction

The ambition of the conference on integrative sciences and sustainable development of rivers is to promote multidisciplinary approaches to engage all stakeholders and to build links to stimulate European and international collaborations between scientists and river managers. ECRR had two labeled sessions in the conference: 1. Ecological continuity and 2. Restoration and ecosystem responses. The conference and the sessions were very successful with respectively more than 500 participants for the conference and with almost 100 participants for each session. There should be mentioned that almost 75% of the audience was French and about 25% international, with 60% out of it European.

In general the content of the presentations was very research related, although many good practical examples were presented. Especially from the Rhone restoration, being very impressive. The two ECRR sessions had mainly an international participation with a good presentation of cases and studies. These were all presentations of submissions from conference participants and (thus) not influenced by the ECRR. The organizers showed themselves very thankful for the ECRR sessions and are looking forward for broader cooperation with the ECRR in the future.

Ecological continuity

Key points:

Concern for the impact on river continuity of both low-head weirs and high dams, with in particular:

- Evidence of impact of low weirs on non-migratory-fish movement and habitat accessibility.
- Evidence of impact of high dams on the whole fish community.



Opening Session IS Rivers 2018 Conference © Bart Fokkens

Concern about the importance of longitudinal hydromorphological continuity, in particular:

- Importance of combining stakeholders' interest with hydromorphological changes approaches.
- Evidence of positive hydromorphological effects from lowering dams in incised rivers.

Science is challenged to provide knowledge and evidence background for stakeholder engagement in river continuity decision making process.

Follow-ups:

- Effectiveness of theoretical and flume based predictive models.
- Continue annual fish monitoring, preferably by camera's.
- Combining stakeholders' interests with hymo approaches.
- Studying hymo effects from lowering dam incised rivers.



ECRR Session: Ecological Continuity © Bart Fokkens



ECRR Session: Restoration and Ecosystem Responses © Giancarlo Gusmaroli





On the "Confluence" tour © Bart Fokkens

Restoration and ecosystem approaches

Key points:

Different types of restoration were presented: site-based, reach-based and habitat enhancement work.

- The case studies were detailed and included many elements of best practices such as clear definition of objective based on detailed hydromorphological diagnostics, a vision for reach-based restoration, stakeholder engagement and monitoring.

- Monitoring was linked to objectives and included innovative elements (e.g. connectivity assessment). Altogether, the case studies presented a structure that was conducive to learning and were very good examples of potential best practices.
- Multiple benefits such as access to new sites for local population were also apparent in some of the case studies.
- Scientists, stakeholders and funders worked closely together.

Follow-ups:

- The case studies were extremely detailed and benefitted from a large amount of investment between local stakeholders, funders and scientists which was a clear success factor.
- There was significant funding available over the long term, including land buy.
- Are these case studies representative? Does a size matter? Do small rivers get the same levels of interest and funding from stakeholders and scientists?
- How sustainable are the schemes? Wood introduction without tree planting requires maintenance. Changes in discharge do not necessarily promote natural sediment process?
- The presented restoration schemes of the Rhône are impressive. However, the presentations made not clear how far the connectivity principles were followed, concerning lateral, longitudinal and vertical connectivity. So, the strategic approach was not clearly presented and seems therefore needing more attention.

In addition to the scientific-technical content, with oral and poster presentations, of the conference the programme offered a walking tour through the "Confluence" district followed by a gala dinner, with on the days after a choice of 'field excursions' on or along the Rhône river. Altogether, the conference was well organised, very informative and showing a great hospitality. And in addition to the downloadable extended abstracts all participants were provided with a printed compendium with the full programme and all abstracts in French and English. So many thanks to the IS Rivers 2018 Conference Team!

Summer School brings youth in CEE a step closer to 2030 Agenda

For a second year, the [Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe](#) (GWP CEE) organized a Summer School on current global water topics for the youth of Central and Eastern Europe. This year, with the title 'Towards 2030 Agenda: A summer school for climate change, innovation and youth advocacy in water management, it took place on the 1st – 6th July at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences in Warsaw, Poland.

The Summer School brought together forty-six MSc and PhD students from 18 countries – Armenia, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Trinidad and Tobago. The students' backgrounds ranged from natural sciences, geography, engineering, to landscape ecology and international relations.

The Summer School curriculum aimed at presenting the most current global and regional water issues, as well as possible ways to address them with innovative approaches. Profes-



Benoît Terrier, Water Agency Rhône, Mediterranean and Corsica and representing ECRR, presents river restoration best practices, ©GWP-CEE.

