Negotiated agreements at basin scale as a tool for the integrated implementation of WFD and FD in Italy: results of a national census of River Contracts experiences (2002-2012) and future challenges

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MANY ACTORS

- state administrative bodies
- regional administrative bodies
- local administrative bodies
- river basin authorities
- environmental agencies
- drainage authorities
- protected area managers
- water authorities
- ...
- farmers
- land developers
- anglers
- whitewater enthusiasts
- sediment miners
- hydropower companies
- environmentalists
- manufacturers
- ...

A WATERCOURSE

MANY STAKES

STAKE

1

...

STAKE

i

...

STAKE

n
We should work like this…

GOOD JOB!
but often we find ourselves like this...

... JOB ??
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or like this…

NO WAY!!
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IS RIVER RESTORATION

A MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?
Both Directives address for an integrated approach to river basin management, through a collaborative governance agenda able to conjugate multi-objectives, multi-levels and multi-stakeholders decision making processes and to achieve jointly the objectives of environmental enhancement and flood risk management.
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**Negotiated Environmental Agreements (NEA)**

**supplementary measure** that may be adopted by District Authorities at river basin scale within respective RBMPs (PoMs)**

**WFD**

Water Framework Directive
(annex VI, part B)

**FD**

Flood Directive
(unique annex, article C4)
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RIVER CONTRACTS

ITALIAN DEFINITION

voluntary agreements amongst public and private subjects variously involved and/or committed into local river issues aimed at the ecological restoration and socioeconomic regeneration (including flood risk reduction) of river watersheds through a participative process

‘80s FRANCE

‘90s BELGIUM

‘00s ITALY
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NATIONAL CENSUS OF RIVER CONTRACTS IN ITALY
state of art and last decade trends

![Graph showing the state of river contracts in Italy](image)

- **TOTAL**: 76
- **Just announced**: 16
- **In progress**: 53
- **Formally subscribed**: 7

At December 2012, there is evidence of the **wide interest over contractual method** for River Basin Management in Italy, but also of the **undeniable difficulty in the finalizing capability** of the involved groups.
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**NATIONAL CENSUS OF RIVER CONTRACTS IN ITALY**

geographic distribution

<table>
<thead>
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<th>ITALIAN REGION</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<td>with a participation process</td>
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<td><strong>76</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
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at December 2012

acknowledgement of a real scattered need in Italy for more inclusive and collaborative decision making process in river management
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NATIONAL CENSUS OF RIVER CONTRACTS IN ITALY
implementation stage

**MAIN FEATURES**
- local knowledge
- local decisions

at December 2012
In a recent international report about Italian environmental performance (OECD, 2013), this trend has been acknowledged within **multi-level water governance issues**, reporting River Contracts as unofficial consultations adopted

(a) when actual implementation of environmental measures falls under the authority of bodies other than River Basin Authorities

(b) in order to reach agreements between public administrations and private actors.
STRENGTHS

(A)
wide interest over contractual method for River Basin Management

(B)
common framework of integrated objectives
→ ecological enhancement of the river corridor
→ landscape improvement of the river valley
→ flood risk reduction along floodplains (*)
→ recreational value endorsement upon watercourses
→ awareness increase amongst river communities

(C)
early tangible responses in terms of river restoration with positive tradeoffs on involved communities

(*) but also geological instability risk reduction as typical of Mediterranean countries
WEAKNESSES

(A) low confidence of stakeholders towards collaborative governance (limits of stakeholders inclusion into participation processes)

(B) undeniable difficulty in the committing capability of the involved groups (less than 10% have been signed)

(C) hardly ever a cost estimation is available within River Contracts’ Action Plans

(D) (where a timeline is available) established deadlines for measures implementation seem to be disappointed
How much effective could River Contracts be in order to properly face with sharpest and tangled conflicts at the basis of river alterations (hydropower, flood works, pollution,...)?

- **Capillary capacity of (trying to be) being inclusive towards stakeholders usually hardly get involved in decision making processes**

- **Risk of insuccess** when dealing with complex interests such as hymo pressures (just fruitless debate or forced social acceptance of preconstituted decisions)

- **Do need for institutional commitment**
- **Do need for skilled facilitators**
What degree of dialogue and synergy could be targeted between large-level strategies developed by District Authorities at the basin scale (RBMPs) and small-level outcomes of River Contracts?

Last 20 years of river basin management in Italy shows that no hierarchy amongst planning scales is key, but rather the capacity of managing a wide number of inputs at a same (time/spatial) scale.

Do need for a tool/process able to acknowledge and elaborate local stakes and solutions for a sole integrated planning exercise.
Which level of **compulsoriness** should accompany the commitments voluntarily agreed by River Contracts subscribers?

**RIVER CONTRACT** NOT JUST COMPULSORY BY LAW, BUT RATHER A TANGIBLE ANSWER TO A SHARED WILL

NO NEED FOR A SPECIFIC PRESCRIPTIVE LAW BUT RATHER A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK THAT SET COMMON TECHNICAL RULES AND ACKNOWLEDGE RESULTS THROUGH:

→ APPRAISING METHODOLOGICAL ROBUSTNESS
→ CHECKING EXTERNAL COHERENCE
→ AWARDING RESULTS (FUNDS ALLOCATION)
FINAL REMARKS

_TO MANTAIN_ the voluntary and collaborative nature of River Contracts as a strength feature, while effectively engaging local communities

_TO DEVELOPE AND DISSEMINTATE_ methodological approach for contractual decision making processes at river (sub)basin scale (capacity building)

_TO SUPPORT_ local agreements with skilled technicians and financial resources (optimization of current ones or activation of new ones) both for decision making processes and for measure implementation

_TO MONITOR AND APPRAISE_ experiences carried out (European and National based Observatory)
FINAL REMARKS

UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF
EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR RIVER RESTORATION
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN AUTHORITIES

PROPOSAL OF ACTIVATION
OF AN EU WORKING GROUP
ON RIVER CONTRACTS
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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