

River Basin Management - Experience of the Rhine -

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Secretary



Internationale
Kommission zum
Schutz des Rheins

Commission
Internationale
pour la Protection
du Rhin

Internationale
Commissie ter
Bescherming
van de Rijn

International
Commission
for the Protection
of the Rhine

International Recognition



2013 European RiverPrize



2014 Thies International RiverPrize

Website for Children



IKSR • Internationale Kommission zum Schutz des Rheins
CIPR • Commission Internationale pour la Protection du Rhin
ICBR • Internationale Commissie ter Bescherming van de Rijn
ICPR • International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine



► 8-11 Jahre - ans - jaar - years 12-14 Jahre - ans - jaar - years



DE RIJN



KLIMAAT-
VERANDERING



BESCHERMING
VAN DE RIJN



LEVEN MET DE
RIJN



INTERNATIONALE
SAMENWERKING



BEELDBANK

DE RIJN

Op deze website vind je allerlei informatie over de Rijn.

Waar wil je meer over weten? Maak je keuze.

Weet jij al veel over de Rijn? [Test het met de quiz!](#)

MENU



De Rijn



Klimaatverandering



Bescherming van de Rijn



Leven met de Rijn



Internationale Samenwerking



Beeldbank

Platform for knowledge exchange



In discussions regarding the “Twinning” part of the **2013 European RiverPrize**, it has been agreed to use the UNECE Water Convention as the main exchange platform

A programme has been elaborated in collaboration with:



On 14 October 2014, a first event under this “**multiple twinning**” approach took place in Geneva during a UNECE Workshop.

Principles for Cooperation



UNECE is developing “Principles for Effective Joint Bodies on Transboundary Water Cooperation”

Some key points:

- Broad competence of a joint body
- Clearly defined tasks and powers
- Facilitation of assessment of impacts
- Adequate, stable and timely financial and human resources in the countries and in the Secretariat

How does this compare to the key elements of the 1998 Rhine Convention?

1999 Rhine Convention



Summary of key-elements

- the **1999 Rhine Convention** can be regarded as an instrument for implementing Integrated Water Resource Management
- It follows most elements of the present draft of the UNECE “Principles for Effective Joint Bodies on Transboundary Water Cooperation”
- however, the Convention does not provide the Commission with any power to adopt binding agreements nor to enforce implementation thereof
- these powers are in fact provided for by national and EU legislation

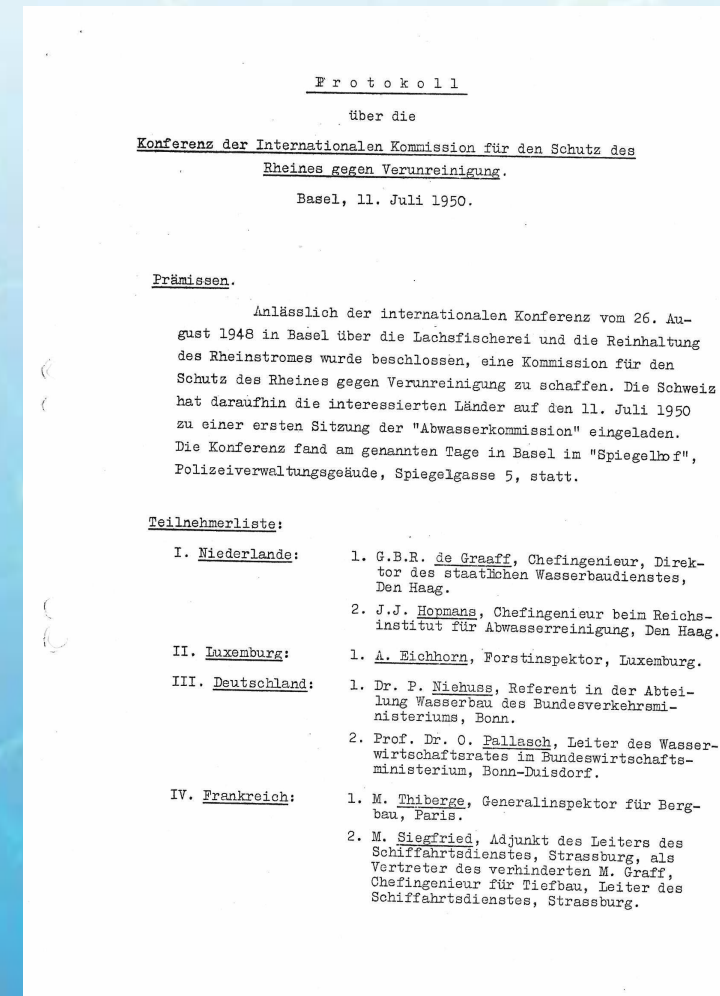
However, work in the ICPR started already in 1950 and developed into a very successful cooperation without such powerful instruments

Landmarks



1950 – Foundation

- People in the Netherlands were suffering from the very poor quality of the Rhine as source for their drinking water and for use in agriculture
- Supported by Switzerland (which was neutral during WWII), the Netherlands initiated the first meeting of the ICPR on 11 July 1950



50ties - 70ties of the 20th Century



First activities

- The first meeting resulted in agreements related to the
 - analysis water pollution
 - development of water protection measures
 - harmonisation of monitoring programmes and methods
 - exchange of monitoring data
- This was followed by a period with
 - building trust and mutual understanding
 - detailed technical discussion on monitoring programmes and best available technologies, agreed upon in the form of recommendations to the Contracting Parties
- But water quality did not really improve

A major disaster was a turning point

01 November 1986



Political Courage and Ambition



The Sandoz Disaster resulted in a recognition that

- there was a joint problem to be solved
- that there was more than chemical quality to improve
- there was a need for a shift from short term detailed technical discussion to long term ambitious goal setting

This happened in a period in which environment received strong public support and resulted in the adoption of the **1987 Rhine Action Programme** with

the Salmon as the flagship for overall improvement and its return and a substantial reduction of inputs of substances as political ambition

The 1987 Rhine Action Programme



- Its target was to improve water quality to such an extent that formerly indigenous species, such as salmon, would be able to return to the river.
- At the same time, the entire ecosystem had to be improved and flora and fauna were to be strengthened
- A consequence, requirements concerning municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants became distinctly more strict and a third treatment stage was introduced to eliminate phosphorous and nitrates
- In addition, industry accepted joint in the efforts, thereby accepting its responsibility

The first survey in 1992 already gave evidence of a considerable reduction of pollutants

A second disaster



- During Christmas 1993 and in January/February 1995, disastrous flood events occurred
- As a reaction, the ICPR adopted a **Flood Action Plan** in 1998 with as objectives for 2020:
 - ❑ reduction of damage risks by 25 per cent
 - ❑ reduction of extreme flood stages downstream the impounded sections by up to 70 cm
 - ❑ raising awareness of the existing flood risks
 - ❑ prolongation of the periods of flood forecasting (early warning system)

Rhine 2020



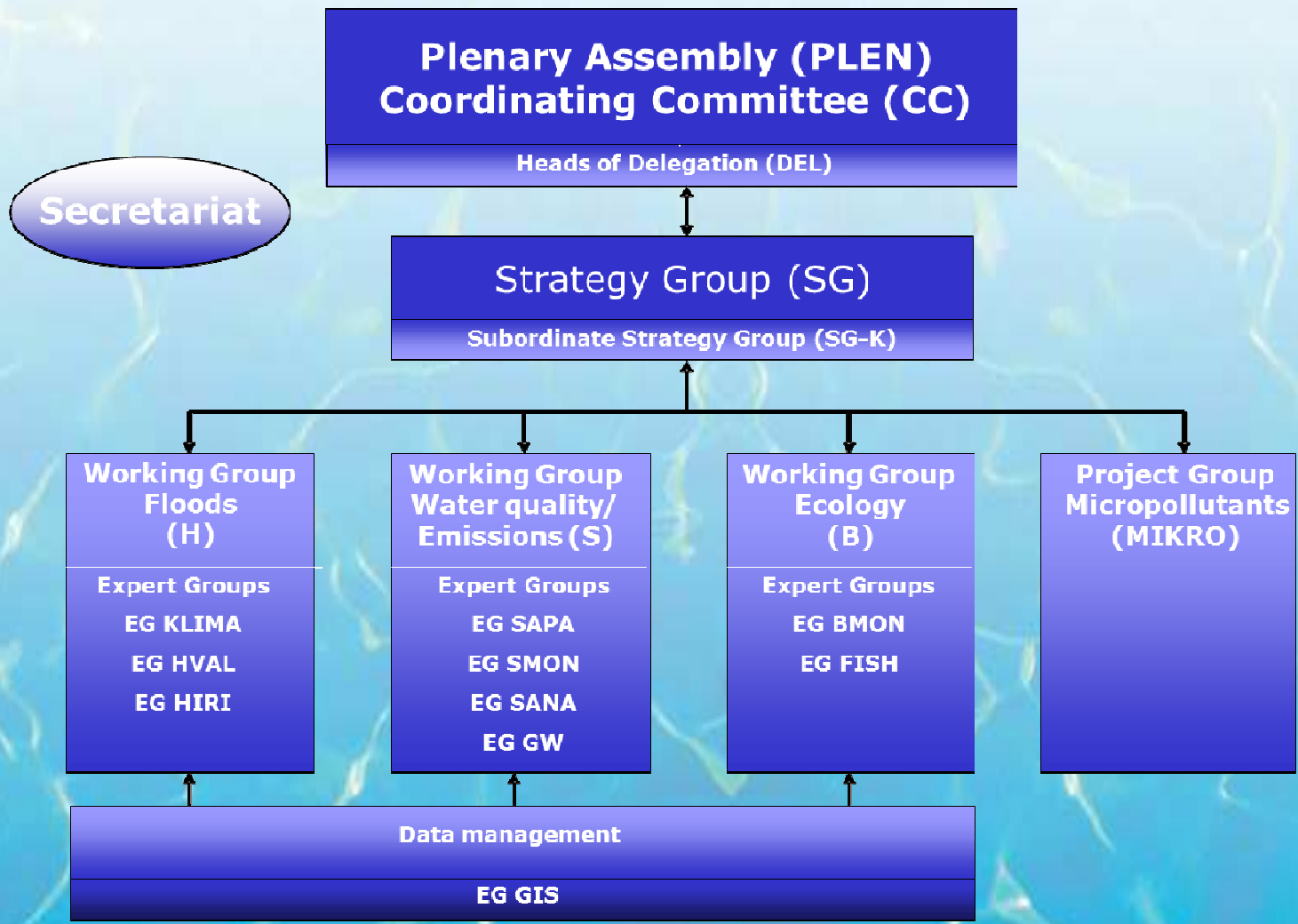
- Following the adoption of the 1998 Flood Action Plan, a comprehensive international water management programme – **Rhine 2020** - was developed, integrating qualitative and quantitative aspects of surface waters and groundwater
- All new and additional targets were then integrated into the new **1999 Rhine Convention**

Cooperation



- **De-centralised organization**
- **National delegations**
 - political mandate
 - technical know how
 - annual budget 1.200.000 €/a (operational costs of the Secretariat)
- **Political framework, no sanctions**
- **Legal framework provided by EU Directives (WFD and FD) and national legislation**
- **All agreements by consensus. Measures as recommendations to countries**
- **Obligation to report on implementation of measures**
- **Small neutral Secretariat, 4 languages**

Organisation



Summary (1)



First Phase (50ties - 70ties twentieth-century)

- Building trust and mutual understanding
- Developing harmonised monitoring and data exchange
- Convincing society of the danger of continuous increasing water pollution

Turning Point: Sandoz Accident (1986)

- From short term detailed technical discussion to long term ambitious goal setting

A period of Integration (1986 – 2000)

- Integration of all relevant policy fields
- The adoption of **Rhine 2020** and the **1999 Rhine Convention**

Summary (2)



At present (since 2000)

- Finding a balance between political ambition and legal requirements and enforceability

Challenges for the future

- How correct the impact of missing environmental management of the past
- How to take account of uncertainties regarding the socioeconomic evolution and the impact of climate change

Lessons learned



Both the Sandoz fire in 1986 and the floods of 1993 and 1995 were triggers for fundamental changes in policy

- a positive approach should be the core of all activities, even when catastrophic events have occurred
- discussion should start with building common denominators, not with identifying disagreements

To increase ownership, agreements should be developed

- bottom-up with involvement of all stakeholders
- in line with top-down objectives

Thank you!



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