

Annual (Financial) Report 2019

Approved in the GMM2020 on 26th November 2020

THE ECRR ASSOCIATION MEMBER AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



1. Board

In 2019 the Board has met 5 times in formal Board Meetings. These meetings were held virtually by conference calls. The Board first tasks were to follow-up the GMM2018 actions concerning the Strategic Intent and the Policy Brief. The Strategic Intent was according to the comments and the decision of the GMM2018 finalised in the course of 2019. And following the GMM2018 discussions, the Policy Brief was transferred into a Position Paper. The final draft was, including some additional comments made, approved in the GMM2019 and finalized shortly after the GMM. Both documents have been made available at the ECRR website.

Making the Board Member/Director Profile and Task Description was another GMM2018 action that was completed in relation to the application of Danka Thalmeinerová as a Board Member. She joined the Board in June, first as an observer and was formally appointed in the GMM2018. In addition, a profile and task description for a Communications Volunteer was made. Both profiles, Board Member and Communications Volunteer were used for vacancy calls for both positions. Unfortunately, this has until 1, January 2019 not resulted in serious applications, that means that in 2020 other actions are needed to fulfill the vacancies of 2 Board Directors and the Communications Volunteer.

As ECRR was invited to become a supporter of the World Fish Migration Foundation and to promote Dam Removal Projects, the Board decided the ECRR would become a supporter. The agreement is about promoting Dam Removal Strategies, developing Dam Removal Best Practices and knowledge and the dissemination of information about Dam Removal in general.

Furthermore, there were five, strategic, workplan related main items that the Board was involved in:

1. The ECRR Submission to the Public Consultation to inform the Fitness Check of the Water Directives
2. The ECRR river continuity survey
3. The planning of the European River Symposium: European Rivers 2021
4. The (development of the) ECRR Workplan and in particular the collaboration with Wetlands International European Association.
5. The implementation of the main conclusions and recommendations from the Evaluation of communication channels and identity of ECRR done by De Lynx consultants in October 2018.

Information on the implementation of these items can be found in other chapters of this report.

2. Operational activities.

Website.

Based on the to renew hosting of the website a plan was developed, not to construct a completely new website, but to reconstruct by modernization. Modernization in technical terms meant partly exporting the present site to a new platform and retaining only the essential content for the new website.

To minimize the amount of information on the website and its databases, we needed to select the essential information out of a huge amount of information available, especially concerning the RESTORE project information. The RiverWiki is now technically, completely disconnected. The ECRR website has now a landing page for a good introduction of the use of the website. The new website offers more flexibility so it is very easy possible to add an extra (main) page, e.g. for a European River Symposium.

An Extranet function has been added to the website and a connection is made with the Mailchimp marketing platform serving our eNews mailings and subscribers database. The Extranet replaces the Workspace that was created with WIEA, because this was not sufficiently used due to installation and usage complications.

The work was 90% completed by the by the end of 2019, enabling us to start from beginning of 2020 using the new website. It appears, as was required, to be user friendly, restricted to essential information, suitable for desktop, tablet and phone and moreover technically much easier to operate and update. And this was achieved at cheaply and very cost effective through against very low costs through 50% contribution of the costs from the WIEA by LIFE Grant funding. But also through a high degree of self motivation and input from the ECRR coordinator in screening the information and building the pages and modules.

There are a couple of remaining issues. First, the pages with extensive information on the river restoration categories are from about 2014/2015 and need an update. This would be a nice job for a student, intern or volunteer in the coming year. The River Wiki also became operational in the same period. Now, with more than 1000 projects described in the RiverWiki there is a nice opportunity to select the best per category and add them by both a description and a link.

Newsletter.

In the first quarter of 2018 the Mailchimp Marketing platform has been taken in use for sending out our newsletters and the management and operation of our subscribers data base. We are using the free basic application, that can against relatively low cost be upgraded if we want to use the more advanced features. This could be case if we want become more commercial.

From the start of using this platform, we issued on an average every 6 weeks an eNews with updates river restoration news and event information. In addition we converted our 'normal' newsletter, of 20 years, into a more Technical Newsletter. This was issued in the summer of 2019. We expect to be able to gradually develop it to a professional 'magazine' on river restoration, with ecological restoration in the broadest sense. The Technical Newsletter of early 2020, is already a step further in this direction.

There is also the possibility that we use Mailchimp for an 'internal' newsletter: ExtraNews, that will only be sent to ECRR Members, (formal), Partners and very special relations. To be explored first.

In 2019 there were issued 8 eNews and 1 Technical Newsletters. eNews issues are often repeatedly (twice) resent to non-openers – one of the administrative tracking benefits of using the Mailchimp platform.

Twitter account

The twitter account @ECRRNetwork is in 2019 more actively operated than in 2018 and the number of followers increased from about 850 to 1050 followers. The account is now also linked to the Mailchimp Marketing platform, enabling to generate tweets as well when sending out a eNews. There could still be more followers if a communication volunteer, especially in social media, would become available to operate this.

Next to that, ECRR is the co-manager of the @RESTORErivers account with over 3000 followers. Our twitter feed, with members and partners tweets, at the website is based on the @RESTORErivers account and is working very well, with a lot of interesting information.

LinkedIn account

There was already a, RESTORE initiated LinkedIn group Restoring Europe's Rivers, with about 500 followers. An ECRR LinkedIn page is now also created and both are increasingly used by ECRR and fortunately also others!

Facebook

ECRR has no Facebook account. However, in the past ECRR initiated a River Restoration Community of Practice amongst a number of River Basin Authorities. A few representatives of them run a Facebook account. European River Restoration Community. They approached ECRR in 2019 for (more) contacts and if possible support. Could be a.o. a webpage on our site.

Youtube

ECRR has a (new) Youtube channel replacing the RESTORE one, although the RESTORE one is still in use as it is holding a.o. presentations from the past conferences.

Communication with ECRR members and newsletter / network subscribers.

Through the changes in the communications channels in 2019 there is not a good overview how many people and subscribers and even member representatives are using and validate ECRR's information through the website, eNews, Technical Newsletter, direct mail etc. However, the impression from the media accounts is that there are much more contacts and increasingly more views and downloads. It is a target for 2020 to analyse and evaluate these results.

An idea is to add a hidden page to the Extranet with information about the Member representatives, e.g, biography, position, personal professional interest in relation to river restoration / the ECRR? This is technical very easy to realize, but does only work if all participate and give their information to the webmaster and will update this!

Having all these communication tools in place it would be good to discuss our communication strategy and branding once again, to see how we can make a maximum profit out of it.

Board Advice and Coordinator operations.

This task was on a voluntary basis done by one person, part time (ca. 60% fte in 2019). This is the reason for requiring an volunteer communications officer, as the coordinator needs to be able to pass some tasks to them and other ECRR members.

3. ECRR Workplan 2018

ECRR's Submission on the Water Framework Directive Review to the European Commission *Introduction*

The progress of this activity that was already started in 2018, was in relation to the timing of the review, discussed in the GMM2018. The conclusion was that although the time and available capacity of the ECRR and its MO's to carry out the reviewing activity were limited, ECRR should emphasize on a contribution. And at least with filling in parts of the questionnaire and producing a thematic, on river restoration issues, position / policy paper.

Activities 2019

At the beginning of the new year 2019, it appeared for several reasons not to be possible and/or effective to work along the lines of the questionnaire of the EC and it was decided to make a discussion note as a start for the joint production of any submission paper that could come out of this process. Having this discussion paper on a short notice was a big step forward, because from then on all members started to comment and supplement to this paper. And after a few discussions cycles and all forces joined we were able to produce a rather rough draft of a

submission paper. But also a paper everybody said about that it could become a very good ECRR submission to the Fitness Check.

On this basis a few editors, especially the ECRR Chairman started to work on it. And again after a number of rounds with comments from all members we were able to deliver our submission, just on time! Now, afterwards, the conclusion can be that it was a wonderful process that has led to an excellent product. Knowing now the EC's evaluation reports, we can conclude that many of our findings, recommendations and conclusion are very similar to those of the evaluators.

Outputs and outcome

ECRR's submission has been presented to a broad audience, by presentations in workshops and on conferences, by articles in our newsletters and of course through our social media and last but not least, through our website. By this way, at the end of 2018 we had already about 7.500 views/downloads of the submission at our website.

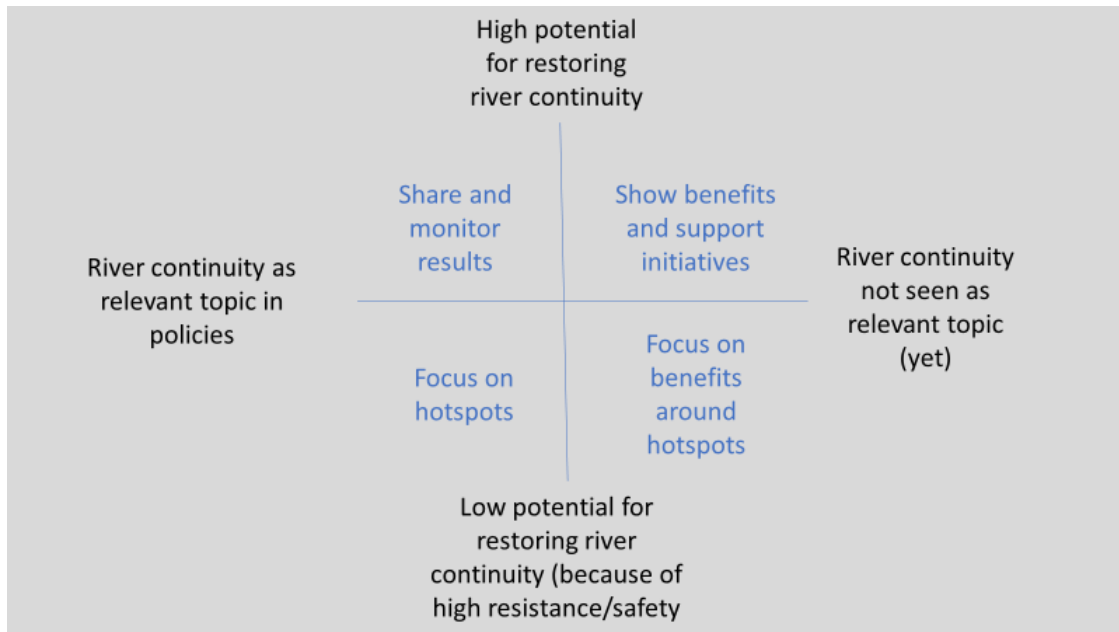
Moreover, the submission underpinned by several ways the importance of ecological river continuity restoration. This endorses ECRR's choice of river continuity restoration as a guiding theme for its promotion plans, activities and communications.

ECRR River Continuity Survey

Introduction

River continuity restoration is key to good river functioning and good ecological status. However, the politics around river continuity have become not just a technical issue, but also societal and communication issues, due to the lobbies of powerful interest groups. This makes it necessary to move towards a multidisciplinary approach of the issue, first targeted on hydraulic structures.

Knowing the country specific situations, questions for additional information to the Amber project are formulated to be able to define what this means for policy and support. What should be the main strategy per country and or group of countries? For example, what do countries need where the issue is already taken up in policies and the potential is still high? This can be analysed through questions to both national governments and stakeholders. In addition to an overall document on ecological continuity restoration a questionnaire is developed. This could, again by example, give the results as shown in the figure below.



Implementation approach

- Check and validate the available formulated questions in cooperation with the ECRR members and the supervisors.
- Elaborate a suitable form of the questionnaire for a user friendly and efficient operation by both, the country persons providing the data/answers and the staff processing the information. This could be done by using Survey Monkey.
- Contacting and distributing the questionnaire through ECRR (member) and related organisations to the country representatives.
- Supporting the ECRR and the country representatives in having filling out the questionnaire.
- Checking, filing and validating the received information.
- Analysing the information according to the objectives of the survey.
- Reporting about the results and outputs of the survey and outcome of the whole process by a general report, one or more articles and (international) presentations

By the end of the 2019 the survey was in the stage that implementation capacity and funding could be sought / arranged in close cooperation by the French Agency for Biodiversity, the World Fish Migration Foundation and ECRR Coordinator.

European River Symposium; European Rivers 2021

On March 3rd 2016 the European River Symposium was held with a focus on Partnerships for Rivers and Water. The Rivers in Europe, Cooperation in River Management Conference targeted actions taken to build positive relationships between key organizations and sectors that influence rivers and water management. This event built upon the success of the European River Symposium in 2013 and 2014 and the cooperation and partnerships that have been developing between diverse actors in protecting, restoring and better managing rivers and water in Europe.

As part of the event the 3rd European River Prize was presented during a gala evening organized and supported by the City of Vienna.

The Building Partnerships for Rivers conference was composed of plenary conference sessions combined with inter-sectoral working groups and panel discussions.

By the of 2019 a draft proposal was available for convening of a 2021 European River Symposium building upon the success of the previous events and the partnerships that have developed among organizers and other actors involved in water management. The general commitment to development and carrying out an event in 2021 was made during a Partners meeting on November 18, 2019.

It should be noted that although the interest is to continue the River Prize as part of the event it was the opinion that awarding a prize was not a prerequisite for convening a River Symposium. A 2021 event could in any case be held without a Riverprize but ultimately it was hoped that every two years a Symposium and prizegiving event could be held.

The topic or title of such a Symposium will include ensuring that connections with the WFD River Basin Management Plans are made, involving Agriculture and Finance Institutions (including Insurance). An underlining topic or theme throughout the conference would be Water Security.

The conference will focus on joint actions and activities to ensure multi-sectoral benefits from river basin management and cooperation among users and actors to improve ecological health and Human Well Being from rivers in Europe. The conference would be two days with initial key note presentations, working groups, and workshops and then plenary sessions that bring the lessons from working groups together. Field excursions can be organised on specific topics or issues on day three.

The Conference Working Groups would address such themes as:

- 1) Ecological River Continuity Restoration and IRBMP
- 2) Hydropower and River Basin Management
- 3) Best Practices in Environmental Protection and Navigational Improvement
- 4) Water Utilities and environmental protection and flood control
- 5) Science, Policy and Practice – An effective Triumverate
- 6) Water quality and agriculture; Linking policies and land and water management.

An overarching topic to be addressed would Climate change, Water Security and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

An essential element will be to see the Symposium as part of a process of building relationships and actions in support of rivers and ensuring that they are ecologically healthy and supporting human populations associated with them.

RiverWiki operation improvement

In 2019 almost 200 hundred new projects were uploaded to the Wiki involving 178project partners. RRC is improving step by step the RiverWiki operation and is happy with the increasing use of the RiverWiki, especially outside the UK. Recently Norway, Finland, France, Italy and Iberia have added many new projects. Norway has chosen the RiverWiki to become their national database for restoration projects. The RiverWiki added 993 users in 2019, bringing the the total number of registered users to 8,742. Both the RRC and the ECRR have a very accessible landing page for the RiverWiki on their website as an introduction to any type of user. The RRC considers to start a user group for the intensive users, in addition to the delegated authorisation that has and can be given to certain (country-user) representatives. Furthermore, the RCC will develop a reporting system on how many, the type, per country, per period etc. projects are added to the RiverWiki.

ECRR and RRC will together explore how a connection can be made between different the River Restoration Categories and certain demonstration projects in the RiverWiki.

The (development of the) ECRR Workplan / Collaboration with WI European Association.

It was concluded that the 'joint work programme' has been difficult in 2018. The cooperation just starting up could not fulfill the (too optimistic) expectations to deliver for € 10.000 with undefined benefits/results. Instead, it was agreed to work together on areas of interest and to then define areas where input either staff time or funds might be made from WIEA grant, as ideas become clear actions with defined tangible, achievable outputs.

WIEA is still committed to the full membership of ECRR. And is still very much active with regard to the WFD. The process and the EP changes in this period make possible progress and work unclear. For 2019 it was agreed to focus on ECRR Website and RiverWiki revisions and the River Continuity Survey.

WIEA would like to support workshops where ECRR can demonstrate the Website and Wiki in combination with discussions on how to provide recommendations for RBMP's, including development concepts for how to demonstrate progress to GES.

ECRR and WI will be up front and honest about our combined and individual capacity. We will think through the implications on the other partner if they fail to deliver as part of the initial planning process. We will work positively to identify good synergies between ECRR and WIEA and how to build the relationship for 2020 onwards.

Representation and participation

Dam Removal Workshop, Lithuania

Two ECRR representatives, Board Member and Coordinator, participated in an Amber National Workshop on: Freeing the Rivers of Lithuania in March 2019. This was a workshop with a broad scope of ecological river restoration to optimize fish migration in Lithuania, but ended with a narrow discussion concerning pro's and cons of the removal of one single dam. ECRR representatives had an important role in this discussion. A main conclusion was that general guidelines and technical knowledge on why and how to remove a dam are urgently needed. There were about 100 participants, mainly Lithuanians.

International seminar on dam removal, Estonia. Let it Flow!

An ECRR representative (Board Member) participated in this Seminar that took place very near the biggest river basin opening (3.300 km of rivers and streams) by removing the Sindi Dam. The Environment Agency of Estonia presented the dam removal strategy for their country and the dams removed until then. On behalf of Dam Removal Europe Bob Ervin, president of American Rivers, presented the current status and the future of the dam removals in USA. And the dam removal situation was presented by three dam removal cases from Sweden, Finland and Spain. And the *Love Flows* documentary had its Estonians premiere.

Sustainable Hydropower Conference, Sweden

In June 2019 an international meeting was held in Storfonsen at Pite River with the theme of sustainable power. There were about 60 participants from 8 different countries representing authorities operators, interest organisations and NGO's. Amongst them was the ECRR coordinator and the Finnish Member representative, the last one giving a presentation on . In this conference Sweden's developed Sustainable Hydropower Strategy was presented, explained and discussed. Main issues discussed were IRBM Planning, Governance, Knowledge and Best Practices. An article for ECRR's Technical Newsletter 1 – 2020 was already prepared by two Swedish Authors.

Europe-INBO2019 Conference, Finland

The Europe-INBO 2019 Conference on the implementation of the European Water Directives was also held in June 2019 with almost 150 participants from 30 countries. ECRR co-ordinator held a presentation about the ECRR Submission to the EC Fitness check for the Water Directives. ECRR's Board Member from Finland participated partly in this conference. Prior to the conference a workshop was organized on integration of Nature Based Solutions (NBS) into the WFD's Programs of Measures for the restoration of basins. A summary report of the conference and the workshop is published in the ECRR Technical Newsletter 1 – 2019.

International Symposium: Dam removal. The Sélune River free to run, France

Two ECRR member organisations were (indirectly) involved in the organization of the symposium in September 2019: The French Biodiversity Agency and its River Resource Centre and the World Fish Migration Foundation through Dam Removal Europe and several ECRR Member representatives participated in the symposium. The symposium was organised around the question; What happens when a river is once free to run? In the Sélune valley (Manche department in Normandy), the largest dam removal project in Europe is being carried out in step with an unprecedented scientific programme aiming to better understand the changes in the ecosystem, monitor the return of migratory fish and participate in the future of the valley. This makes it very worthwhile for the ECRR to follow the project to be able to receive the information and share it amongst our audience. A first publication, on the symposium itself became already available in December 2019, published by the French Agency for Biodiversity;

XVth Clean Water or Russia 2019 & 50 years RosNIIVKh, Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Russian National Research Institute for Integrated Water Management and Protection held a symposium with several plenary meetings, as an ecological restoration session, a conference of the Network of Water Organisations of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Meetings including a special session on the Comprehensive Plan for ecological rehabilitation of the Chernostchinsk and Verkne - Viya reservoirs as a source of drinking water for Nizhni Tagil, round Tables, open lecture for students, contests, exhibition presentations and a technical excursion.

Nadezhda Prokhorova, the General Director of the Institute and all the staff have organised an excellent symposium with an outstanding celebration programme, offering the more than 200 participants from ca. 20 countries, the unique opportunity for sharing knowledge and information, to create commitment for international cooperation, for partnering for innovative approaches of water management and for extended networking, but also meeting many colleagues and good friends.

RosNIIVKh's input, as one of the longest standing members of ECRR, was vital to progressing ECRR from its starting point towards its current status as a recognized European Association. Saija Koljonen (SYKE, Finland) and Bart Fokkens (ECRR) represented the ECRR in the symposium and celebrations by giving presentations and offering gifts at the special occasion.

National river restoration events

A number of ECRR members, mainly the National Centres for River Restoration organised in 2018 national river restoration events. This was the case for Italy-by CIRF, Iberia-by CIREF, Norway-by the Norwegian Environment Agency, UK-by the River Restoration Centre Finland by Syke, France-by the Agency for Biodiversity. All these national events are at least publicized, stimulated and often, directly or indirectly, supported by the ECRR.

International River Symposium 2019, Australia

About 600 people attended the 20th anniversary RiverPrize Gala during the 22nd International Riversymposium in Brisbane. The 2019 Thies International RiverPrize Winner was the James River USA. ECRR coordinator was, as a member of the Judging Panel Member present at the

symposium and chaired as a representative of the ECRR a Monitoring and Evaluation Session on the benefits of ecological river restoration.

The IRF is currently developing an International Resilient Rivers Blueprint for organisations around the world to commit to enabling their rivers to leapfrog from recovery to resilience. The International Resilient Rivers Blueprint will inspire a global transformation to resilient rivers. The goal is to develop a Blueprint which will be applicable to rivers worldwide.

At the International River Symposium a large delegation of the Asian River Restoration Network (ARRN) was present, organising two sessions and reconfirming the cooperation with the European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR). For this both organisations are looking forward to participate again in each others future events and co-organising sessions at any other occasion like the International Riversymposium.

4. ECRR Member's activities 2019

(NC=National Centre; TC=Topic Centre)

All	Contributed to the ECRR Submission to the EC's Water Legislation Fitness Check
NC Sweden	International Sustainable Hydropower Conference with 60 participants; 1 article Technical Newsletter; GMM2019
NC France	Preparation River Continuity Survey; Preparation of (English) communication materials on RR; Partner International Sélune Symposium; Uploaded 5 Wiki projects GMM2019;
NC Poland	Initiated ECRR's Position Paper; Uploaded 3 Wiki projects GMM2019
NC Italy	National River Restoration Conference; Uploaded Wiki projects
NC Norway	National River Restoration Symposium; RiverWiki Norways National Project Database; Uploaded 13 Wiki projects
NC Ukraine	n.a.
NC Finland	National River Restoration Conference; 1 Technical Newsletter article; Uploaded ?? Wiki projects GMM2019
NC Russia	International River (Restoration) Conference with 200 participants, including field excursion; Production 1 Technical Newsletter; Co-editing 1 Technical Newsletter; GMM2019
NC UK	National River Restoration Conference; Operation and maintenance of the RiverWiki / Database English, technical RR communication materials; Uploaded 85 Wiki projects MICS project; 1 Technical Newsletter article

	GMM2019;
NC Netherlands	1 article Technical Newsletter; Uploaded 18
TC Fishmigration	Preparations of the River Continuity Survey Partner 3 DRE Workshops/Seminars/Conferences Organiser World Fish Migration Day GMM2019;
TC INBO	Europe-INBO2019 Conference, Finland 150 participants; GMM2019
TC WI	Financial Support Website Upgrade Financial Support Submission WFD Fitness Check English Technical reports on RR (Benefits) GMM2019;
TC GWP	Several events, communications in English on RR in CEE

5. ECRR's General Member Meeting 2019

Day 1

ECRR's General Members Meeting 2018 was held on 18 and 19 November in Vienna. . Almost all 14 member organisations were represented by 16 participants to ECRR's 3rd annual General Members Meeting. The original plan GWP organizing an hosted meeting in Bratislava was not possible because of staff changes and a heavy workload with GWPCEE. Fortunately this could be replaced by a meeting in Vienna, hosted by several organisations: World Bank, International Association for Water Works in the Danube Basin, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, Danube Parks and viadonau.

An important reason for this hosting was that the members meeting was combined with a meeting of partners of the 2016 European River Symposium organized in Vienna. Those partners were the hosts and with a number of other partner organisations they wanted to explore the possibility of another European Symposium to be held in 2020-2021. All partners expressed great interest in relaunching the European River Symposium. It was agreed that in the coming months efforts would be organised to finalize a decision to hold a 2021 Symposium.

In ECRR's formal member meeting a (multi) annual work plan was discussed in relation to a draft funding strategy for the activities. An important decision made was that ECRR should prioritize and focus on a few thematic activities. For the coming year(s) this is first of all river continuity restoration, including dam removal. Other themes are climate change and river restoration in relation to floods and droughts and a follow up of ECRR's Submission on the Water Framework Review and the EC's Fitness Check Evaluation. Furthermore the RiverWiki must be upgraded and made more user friendly, being able to maintain it as an important tool for sharing best practice river restoration knowledge and information.

On the second day of the meeting a field visit was provided to two Danube river restoration projects near Vienna. To Stopphenreuth, already implemented and a best practice LIFE project and to Spittelauer Arm, a new side branch restoration project. Both projects are by scale and complexity very innovative and therefore impressive river restoration demonstration projects.

Financial report 2019.

ECRR Annual Balance 2019					
Balance 1/1/2019	€	1.385,55			
Member fees	€	9.000,00	Bank costs	€	142,75
			Insurance costs	€	549,09
			Present NC Russia	€	150,00
			GMM	€	803,45
			Collaborative workplan	€	2.350,00
Total	€	10.385,55	Total	€	3.995,29
Result	€	5.004,71			
Balance 31/12/2019	€	6.390,26			

Explanatory remarks concerning costs made outside this justified budget.

- ✓ Board members and coordinator have no (direct) costs claimed made for the regular fulfilling of the activities in relation to their position with the ECRR.
- ✓ Board members and coordinator have no travel and hotel costs claimed for international activities. These were reimbursed by their employer or covered by themselves.
- ✓ The hosting costs for the ECRR website were covered by Wetlands International.
- ✓ The design and production costs for the newsletters were covered by the Russian National River Restoration Centre / Institute for Integrated Water Management and Problems.
- ✓ The costs for the year subscription of Citrix GoTo Meeting system were sponsored.
- ✓ Hosting costs for the GMM2019 were covered by the IAWD/WB and Danube Parks.
- ✓ These costs amount easily a total of € 20,000,-- to € 25.000,-- making us very thankful to the supporters and contributors.



Participants of the ECRR General Members Meeting on 18/19 November 2019, International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area / World Bank, Vienna, the Austria © ECRR.