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## Introduction

Dear all,

Herewith I present with great pleasure a special ECRR newsletter, dedicated to the first continuation event after the 6th World Water Forum of 2012. The ECRR played an important role at the WWF6, as it organized one of the European regional target sessions: "Water ecosystems protection & restoration", with specific focus on River Restoration.

One of the results here was to start and initiate a mutual cooperation between river basin pilot areas in order to develop best practices of ecological restoration measures and land use planning and to adopt the selected topics (Land Use, Public Education, Sustainable Tourism, Sharing Best Practices and Integrated River Basin Management) in at least three integrated river basin management plans.

In this newsletter, you will find a report about the kick off seminar that was initiated and chaired by Bart Fokkens the chairman of the ECRR. The seminar, hosted by the

Agence de L' Eau, was held in Lyon, in March 2013. Representatives of five river basins met to elaborate and start up mutual cooperation. Thanks to the committed river basins and especially to Benoit Terrier of Rhône Basin Authority who was responsible for a perfect organisation, the seminar was very successful.

The results of this cooperation will be presented as well during a side event at the next European River Restoration Conference in Vienna, in September this year.

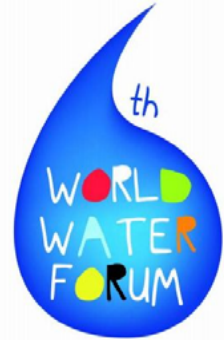
The outcome of this seminar is promising and encourages all basins to continue and prepare additional input towards the next steps to reach the targets set at Marseille. Most presentations, articles etc. of the seminar can also be found on the website of ECRR, via a link with the seminar proceedings at [www.ecrr.org](http://www.ecrr.org).

I wish you pleasant and fruitful readings.

*Hil R. Kuypers*  
Secretary ECRR







## New river basin pilots in continuation of WWF6

### 1. Introduction

In March 2012, during the 6th World Water Forum at Marseille, ECRR hosted a workshop on river restoration, by the working title: Develop new knowledge and know-how on rivers hydro-morphology, restoration and protection of water ecosystems.

One of the targets set here was to establish by 2015, the adoption of best practices of ecological restoration measures and land use planning by at least 3 river basin authorities.

This target would implicate that National and/or European policy objectives in the field of protection and restoration of water ecosystems are implemented in three or more river basin management plans, based on new knowledge about land banking and/or land use planning, best practice of river restoration approaches and stakeholder involvement, public education and newly developed sustainable tourism planning.

### 2. ECRR initiated a target follow up activity

Derived from the WWF event at Marseille, the following **sub targets** were selected that should be elaborated as a continuation activity in the river basin pilots:

- Land use and land banking: At least 3 local land use and land banking initiatives in different countries are defined as useful tools for river and water ecosystem restoration.
- Best practices: A web based tool is designed to enable policy

makers, river basin planners, and a wide range of practitioners and experts to share information and good practice on river restoration.

- Public education and involvement: Proposals are described for assessing the effects of public education on awareness raising on ecological functioning of rivers, public participation and stakeholder involvement as to river and water ecosystem restoration.
- Sustainable tourism: Draft criteria are developed for "good cases" of integrating sustainable tourism development in land and water management planning.

### 3. Committed pilot basins

Already during the Marseille workshop, representatives of several river basins have shown interest to become a pilot basin for the implementation of the (sub)targets and to disseminate their findings. These basin (authorities) are:

- River Irpin in Ukraine
- River Irwell in the UK
- River Arpa in Armenia
- Órbigo river in Spain
- River Rhone in France

To support this initiative, a number of organizations support the implementation of the various solutions to these targets: GWP/ ONEMA, Wetlands International WI, the Dutch government ser-



vice for land and water management DLG, the UK River Restoration Centre RRC and INBO. ECRR is coordinating the activities to provide a common base for the pilot basins to cooperate all efforts and disseminate experiences.

#### 4. Planning of activities

This new cooperation between these five pilot basins and the supporting organizations, under the coordination of ECRR, started with a kick off seminar from March 19-22, 2013. The seminar was hosted by the Agence de l'Eau, i.e. the Rhone-Mediterrannée-Corse basin Authority, and took place in Lyon, France. Representatives of all pilot basin areas were present. This kick off seminar at Lyon was the first event, organized by ECRR that marked the start of active cooperation between these five pilot basins.



In September 2013, in Vienna the international ECRR/ICPDR/RESTORE conference will be organised. As part of the conference, a side event will be held on behalf of this initiative group, with DLG and WI taking the lead to coordinate the preparations. During this side event, the draft results of the different river restoration pilots, e.g. the progress of action plans of the five river basin organisations will be presented and evaluated.

In 2014, an ECRR Seminar about River Restoration and Integrated River Basin Management Planning is foreseen. Part of this event will be a presentation of the draft basin plans and the related aspects land and land use, best practises of river restoration, stakeholder involvement, public education and participation and integrated land and water management concerning sustainable tourism development.

Finally, in 2015 is a the presentation of the pilot results scheduled during the next World Water Forum.

#### 5 Implementation

The programme of the seminar in Lyon (March 2013) was as follows:

1. Presentation of the pilot basins
2. Presentations of topics by the supporting organizations on knowledge for:
  - Land use planning, by DLG
  - Best practices of river restoration, by Wetlands International
  - Public education, EWP/ONEMA
  - Stakeholder involvement
3. Field visit, organized by Agence de l'Eau/Rhone
4. 5th European River restoration Conference
5. Funding possibilities for future cooperation and projects

6. Expectations, roles and outputs of pilot basins
7. Next steps, follow up activities, planning



#### 5.1 Presentation of the pilot basins: with main features

**Rhone basin:** An overview was given of restoration projects, especially former oxbows. Focus has been laid on ecological continuity, integrated policies, removal of river blockades, etc. Cost-Benefit analyses proved to be complicated here, merely related to ecological restrictions. Attention still has to be paid to sustainable tourism, public education. Eroding corridors may have impact on land use and land claims, including servitudes.

**Irpin River:** Many land issues are at stake here, with conflicting interests of agriculture and nature, reassessment of drainage systems, recreational use etc. The project organisation opted for an interactive stakeholder involvement (yet on a small scale) and declared a strong need for cooperation and knowledge sharing with the other pilot basins. In addition, protecting natural wetlands at the Irpin basin was explained by Wetlands International; here the challenge was and is to find the right balance between nature and economy.

**Órbigo River:** Representatives of the Órbigo river basin showed a nice example of a successful integrated river restoration project, recovering the morphology and hydraulic capacity of the former streambed of the river. Public involvement and participation at all stages of the project proved to be very fruitful. Some difficulties were shown related to expropriation (sense of unfairness in using money for this purpose.)





**Arpa River:** The Arpa river basement system was told to be a good example of a transboundary river basin, with increasing competition by several conflicting interests, bank erosion and flooding problems. On a bigger scale/level the Kuras/Aras basin, to cope with this situation, has a need for integrating land use planning tools, with a focus on capacity building (by study visits, expert missions etc.) and surveying best possible options on a basin scale. This requires a national policy on RBM.

**River Irwell:** In this example the participants were shown good practices wherein many stakeholders are involved (f.e. over 10.000 anglers...!) in a restoration project; recently with much focus on removal of weirs. Also, many volunteers played an active role, most of them coming from urban areas. Here seemed also a need for a more integrated river basin approach.



## 5.2 Presentations of topics

- a. Land use planning, by DLG
- b. Best practices of river restoration, by Wetlands International
- c. Public education, EWP/ONEMA
- d. Stakeholder involvement

Based on the reflection by representatives of the five pilot basins, land use issues are at stake on different levels and in specific situations. For that purpose a note combining inputs and examples from practice could be prepared, coordinated by DLG, with pilots to bring in their specific needs/situations, thus making it as concrete as possible.

Regarding the topic of best practices, it appeared that different drivers for different situations of river restoration exist. Challenges are awareness (why), practical knowledge (how), access to technical solutions, and need for support and guidance. It was commonly agreed upon that the best way to achieve this is to establish some kind of a CoP (Community of Practice), starting with the five river basin pilots present.

This initiative may become more manifest, and even may

evolve into a project by setting concrete goals. By that way, such a project could inspire and guide ecological river restoration across Europe at the watershed to river basin scale. The pilot basins agreed to achieve this through the establishment of a “**Community of Practice**” (CoP) to develop and sharpen their thinking, strategies and actions to implement river restoration, with specific focus on the four topics.

## 5.3 Field visit along the Rhone

As part of the seminar, a field trip has been organized by Agence de Léau. After having a look at the hydropower dam, some restored oxbows in the downstream part of the Rhone river were visited. People were hosted by rangers of the SMIRIL organisation. This organisation (merely volunteers) invests a lot in public education, informative programs for schools etc. and promotes tourism in relation to ecological river restoration. It is peculiar to notice that, on a very short distance from a big city and industrial sites, in a very constrained area, river restoration proves to be successful. Monitoring data of these spots showed already a great success in reintroducing various species, like the beaver, otter, king fisher etc..



## 5.4 Side event 5<sup>th</sup> European River Restoration Conference at Vienna

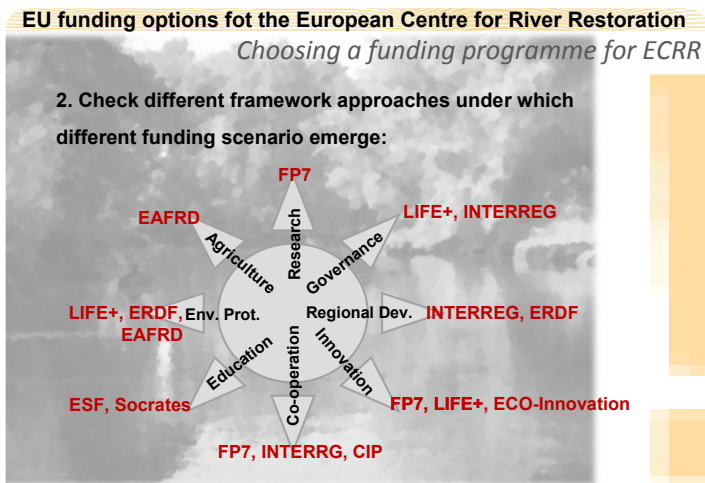
The 5th River Restoration Conference in Vienna planned for September 2013, is organized by ECRR, together with ICPDR and the RESTORE Life project. The draft program includes a side event for the five pilot basins. During this big event, also the concluding RESTORE symposium will take place. All pilot basins are willing to cooperate to prepare the side event at the Vienna conference.

Both WI and DLG offered to assist and coordinate the activities to prepare this side event and make it successful. Communication about this event will be provided by WI.

## 5.5 Funding possibilities

A short presentation about funding gave an insight view on co-funding possibilities of the pilots initiatives to work as a common project. An option hereto could be the EU Life+ or Interreg IV. Finding the right EU funding program however requires

some analytical steps. A scheme of possible funding option is shown below:



blue! advancing european projects

20130321 Dorothea Palenberg

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In order to prepare and elaborate successful applications for co funding, at least four decisions have to be made by the pilot basins, for example who takes the lead what will be the umbrella theme, how to define innovation and what are possible innovative demonstration projects. In addition, also the EU green infrastructure solutions could be involved in RR measures and approaches.

As umbrella theme the following statement was proposed:  
 “ river basin plans include ecological, hydro-morphological, socio-economical river restoration measures and strategic land use and land banking plans”.  
 An innovative aspect is that rivers are to be restored by a river basin scale approach.

## 5.6 Shared expectations and outputs of pilots areas



The different pilot basins offer different views and approaches. For Eastern Europe these may catalyze even new RR projects. A suggestion is to formulate an action plan and short, mid-term and long-term activities to which implementation all pilot basin offered assistance and mutual cooperation. Such an international scope may also be important for policy makers to raise more support to river restoration. Exchanging knowledge helps to become better river restorers.

Partner organizations like WI and DLG may assist and enhance river restoration by connecting people, collecting best practices, and make these available by database or wiki-tools. Innovative approaches should especially be focussed on the 4 topics of this seminar and each of the pilots could adopt one of the topics. It was expressed that a common action plan to achieve this would be helpful.

## 6. Community of Practice CoP

Exchanging knowledge helps to become better river restorers. Challenges here are awareness (why), practical knowledge (how), access to technical solutions and the need for support and guidance. A commonly shared idea towards meeting these challenges is to strive for establishing a CoP (Community of Practice), starting with the five pilot basins.

Results and experiences from this CoP could be used to engage and support other actors in river basins and highlight the solutions to many of the barriers preventing more widespread uptake of river restoration.

Partner organizations like WI and DLG could assist and enhance river restoration by connecting people and collect best practices. As a first step it was agreed by all pilots to prepare a kind of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to commit mutual cooperation and make the CoP more or less official. Such a MoU may also help to find and acquire co-funding sources for this initiative. The signing of the MoU could mark the official start of the CoP, probably during the side event at the RR conference in September 2013, at Vienna.



There is a need to expand the debate and capacity to act further beyond scientific and technical experts towards river basin planners, landscape architects and managers. This is necessary to bring existing understanding and technical expertise into the minds and actions of those tasked with river basin challenges. This had been one of the drivers to organise the Lyon event. It was concluded that events like these are an excellent way to move the river restoration agenda forward and thus to encourage a number of river basins all over Europe to pilot and share their progress and experiences.

**Note: All presentations are available on the ECRR website via the following link: [www.ECRR.org/](http://www.ECRR.org/).**



## Events calendar

For events in other continents please consult the website

Date	Title	Location	Further info
25-26 June 2013	Restore training course	Utrecht, the Netherlands	<a href="http://www.restorerivers.eu">http://www.restorerivers.eu</a>
5-9 Aug 2013	3d Biennial Symposium International Society River Science	Beijing, China	<a href="http://www.2013isrs.org">http://www.2013isrs.org</a>
5 Aug 2013	Geomorphic and Ecological Fundamentals for River and Stream Restoration	Lake Tahoe, California	<a href="http://laep.ced.berkeley.edu/courses/riverrestoration/">http://laep.ced.berkeley.edu/courses/riverrestoration/</a>
18 Aug 2013	11th Intecol International Congress Of Ecology	London, UK	<a href="http://intecol2013.org/">http://intecol2013.org/</a>
27-08-2013	The 8th International Conference on Geomorphology of the International Association of Geomorphologists	Paris; France	<a href="http://www.geomorphology-iag-paris2013.com">http://www.geomorphology-iag-paris2013.com</a>
11-13 Sept 2013	5th European River Restoration Conference	Vienna, Aut	<a href="http://www.ERRC2013.eu">http://www.ERRC2013.eu</a>
15 Okt 2013	Hymo Restoration of Rivers	Namur, Belgium	<a href="http://www.colloque.walphy.be">http://www.colloque.walphy.be</a>
4 - 8 Nov 2013	International Water Week (IWW)	Amsterdam, Ne	<a href="http://www.internationalwaterweek.com/">http://www.internationalwaterweek.com/</a>

## Call for articles

The newsletter of the ECRR should also be a way to share with one another what interesting work is being done, information about seminars or literature.

One way of doing this is by writing an article of any project, event or literature you may be acquainted with. Send this article (**maximum of 500 words**) to the secretariat of the ECRR at [info@ecrr.org](mailto:info@ecrr.org).

We will take a close look to the content and if it is coherent with the philosophy of ECRR (ecological river restoration and sharing knowledge) your article will be published with pleasure in the next edition (s) of the ECRR Newsletter.

The secretariat of the ECRR hopes to receive any article on ecological river restoration from any of its members.



## Free Membership ECRR!

All who are interested in river restoration and sustainable water management are encouraged to join.

Members receive the ECRR newsletter approximately four times per year, and are the first to be informed about activities by the ECRR, its members and partner organisations.

To register, go to [www.ecrr.org](http://www.ecrr.org), and click contact.



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Secretariat: DLG Government Service for Land and Water Management, P.O.Box 20021, 3502 LA Utrecht, The Netherlands | [www.ecrr.org](http://www.ecrr.org). Executive secretary Mr. Hil R. Kuypers. If you do not wish to receive the ECRR newsletter in the future, please send an email to [info@ecrr.org](mailto:info@ecrr.org) with the subject "unsubscribe". This will also terminate your ECRR membership.