

Reports of the ECRR Seminar on: 'National River Restoration Centres/ Networks' Bucharest, Romania 7th – 8th of July

Impressions ECRR Seminar: 'National River Restoration Centers/ Networks' 2

Introduction 2
Short Impression 2

Impression of the site visit in Bucharest 4

Introduction 4
Description 4

Overall conclusions of the Seminar and site visit 5

Seminar 5
Site visit 5

List of separate appendices 5



Impressions ECRR Seminar: 'National River Restoration Centers/ Networks'

7th of July 2010

10.00hr – 17.30hr

Location: Conference room
Apele Romane Bucharest Hotel
Bucharest, Romania

Introduction

The main target of this seminar was to exchange information on setting up a national River Restoration Centre/Network and to stimulate the establishment and development of these centres/networks. Special attention was being paid to the harmonisation of river restoration approaches and implementation and the data collection about the best practices of river restoration in international river basins. For that reason, representatives of water management organisations, private or public, from countries that did not have a river restoration centre/network yet were especially welcomed.

Short Impression

The chairman Mr. Bart Fokkens opened the seminar with a welcome to all the participants, especially the representatives of (new members and new national centres) of the ECRR. He expressed his gratitude to the Romanian hosts and all those who were involved in the preparations. He explained the target again.

After the introduction of the chairman of the ECRR, the representative of the Romanian Government and Apele Romana i.c. Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Director General of the General Department for Water management presented his view on river management. He made excuses of the absence of Mr. Ovidiu Gabor, Director General Adjunct of Apele Romana. Mr. Gabor was too much involved in coordination of all actions because of the severe and actual flooding problems in the North east of the country.

He stressed the importance of ecological restoration as a modern approach of river management. After a long period of dealing with water management as if mankind could always have control on nature, the Romanian authorities now gained the understanding that accommodate to nature is a better way to cope with extreme weather conditions (dry and wet) given both the geohydrological and social- economical circumstances. He urged also the necessity of adaptation of agricultural, industrial and organizational developments to these principles.

After those introductions Martin Janes of the RRC delivered an address on the National River Restoration Centre in the UK. That RRC is one of the first to be founded, even before the existence of the ECRR. He illustrated the need of founding of a knowledge network for science and practise in the UK in the nineties. In the present days the role is also an independent national information and advice centre: small, impartial, respected and non-threatening.

Mr. Josu Elso, who gave a rough sketch of the recently founded National Centre in Spain and Portugal, followed the presentation of Martin Janes. He noticed that the implementation of the WFD, the assessment of the Spanish National Strategy for River Restoration and the 4th International Conference of ECRR in Venice were the main reasons for founding the Iberian National Centre (CIREF). These all are aimed to restore ecological quality of river systems. Mr. Elso explained how the organisation is built up and that volunteers carry out most of the work. At last he pointed out the plans for the near future, such as communication, cooperation, education, inventory and facilitating project preparation.

Before the interruption Mr. Wim Zeeman, secretary of the ECRR, put in a nutshell, the history and special organization of river restoration in the Netherlands. He illustrated the scope of River Restoration by stating that not only rivers are involved but also smaller brooks and water systems are handled according to the same principles. His presentation made clear that due to the special situation in the Netherlands, there is no real National River Restoration Centre. In relation to the national Policy on River Restoration, many Dutch organisations are already heavily involved in River Restoration. Different formal and informal River Restoration networks (of practitioners) are active too. DLG, the host organisation of the ECRR secretariat has contacts with many of these networks. Furthermore the impact of the European guidelines was briefly indicated too.

At last the General Director of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Mr. Mihai Costache gave an interesting presentation about River Restoration and Integrated River Basin Management Planning in Romania. He also gave a nice overview of how Romania did cope with the WFD. This was nice to see and to compare with the proceedings of the WFD of other countries. Although he was not able to tell the details, he showed also some pilot projects of ecological river restoration.

In the afternoon Mrs. Graziella Jula of Apele Romane presented the redevelopment of the Danube River on the Romanian sector. After a long period of anthropogenic interferences together with the climatic change the hydrological regime was altered. During the last decennium severe floods and damage were the result. She illustrated the new approach of integrated river management trying to find a balance between the (ecological) principles of the WFD and Flood directive. What means that about 30% of the "Green Danube Corridor" plan should be realised. The optimal locations for this were already determined. And in addition to this there will retention areas be needed. It is not clear what the (right) location for these areas should be. Altogether it was clear that this approach attuned with the targets of the ECRR.

After that Mrs. Ute Menke of RWS gave a short introduction of the film with some examples of Dutch River Restoration projects.

After these movies 3 parallel interactive sessions were hold to discuss the topics, issues and questions raised by the audience more deeply and specifically. It was very fruitful for all the participants as well as for ECRR-BM and secretariat. A lot of questions popped up about the set up of national centres and the organisational, financial structure and other management aspects of these; these achieved the main goal of the seminar. It was clear that the identification of questions and needs concerning the establishment of a national centre on river restoration was important. Maybe developing a blueprint for setting up a National Centre could be helpful.

One was also interested in the function and the role of a NC and the relation with the ECRR as a whole. At last a question raise how a National Centre could get financial support but still remain independent.

At the end of the day Mr. Bart Fokkens as chairman of te ECRR, drew conclusions in the sense that this seminar contributed to the awareness, need and operationalisation of National Centres. He stated to believe that this was an important and fruitful step in the development of a European wide network of National Centres for RR. He thanked all participants for their active contributions.

NOTE: For downloading PowerPoint Presentations see for instructions attached Appendix.



Impression of the site visit in Bucharest

8th of July 2010
08.00hr-18.00hr
Bucharest, Romania

Introduction

On the 8th of July the participants of the ECRR visited 3 sites near Bucharest, in the Ilfov County.

Successively we put in at:

- The Buftea Dam in the Colentina River,
- The Bilciuresti Dam, part of the Bilciuresti-Ghimpati water derivation which purpose is to supplement the water flow along the Snagov and Colentina Rivers
- The Snagov River

The first two locations are situated in the North West of Bucharest. The third one (Snagov) is situated in the North of Bucharest

All these sites were an illustration of present works on river rehabilitation and thus not real ecological river restoration in this part of Romania.

Description

Three visits were made:

1. First stop was at the Buftea Dam situated on the Colentina River;
2. The second stop (where you had the coffee break) was at Bilciuresti Dam, part of the Bilciuresti-Ghimpati water derivation which purpose is to supplement the water flow along the Snagov and Colentina Rivers by diverting an additional water flow from Ialomita River;
3. The third stop was Snagov Lake (lunch and boat trip) situated on the Snagov River.

Ad 1) The Buftea lake was created just before World War II in order to suppress malaria, is now a buffer lake for regularization purposes, mainly needed for flood mitigation and distribution of additional water for refreshing purposes to the 15 lakes downstream in the Colentina valley and the city of Bucharest. A bottom discharge is guaranteed now on one hand, drainage in times of heavy rainfall is also provided.

Ad 2) The Lisiciuresti - Ghimpati water derivation was built in the late 30-ies, a dam and transport system, also needed for additional water supply in the Colentina valley. On the other hand it is also used for flood protection and fisheries. Rehabilitation works started in 2003. Unfortunately heavy precipitation and floods damaged the constructions. So works are still in progress.

Ad 3) Snagov Lake, originally created by a natural bar in the river, is now a highly artificial lake. The surrounding area is partly covered by forest, relicts of more than two ages ago, and a nature reserve. Partly the riparian land is built up area.

On the way back to Bucharest, Mr. Fokkens extended gratitude to guides and hosts. Reflecting on what was shown he concluded that river management is getting more and more integrated in Romania. Different functions are now a day's included, like food protection, urban and economic development, leisure and recreation, but the ecological function is still weak. He pointed out that (discussing about) the founding of a national RR- centre as we started these days might contribute to pay more attention to ecological aspects of River Restoration.

NOTE: For detailed description and list of participants of the site visit see attached Appendix



Overall conclusions of the Seminar and site visit

7th – 8th of July 2010
Bucharest, Romania

Seminar

One of the targets was to widen the network of National Centres. Representatives of 7 countries were present and represented who have the intention or plans to found a National Centre for river restoration in their country. These countries were: Estonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Norway, Serbia, Czech Republic and France. Adding these countries up with the existing ones and special candidates as Greece and Germany, in the near future more than half of the European countries will have a National Centre.

Discussions about the exact meaning of River Restoration (RR) clarified the meaning and importance of ecological interpretation according to the vision of ECRR versus some other and wider interpretations of EU-legislation.

Many questions were asked, some answers and various advises were given as to items such as why and how founding National Centres. The role and function of National Centres were considered, and the relation and cooperation with the ECRR too.

Practical things such as EU- funding, management and formal structures were discussed. Recommendations in terms of a blueprint for setting up a National Centre would be welcome for all new representatives.

Site visit

The site visit gave a good impression on river rehabilitation in Romania. It was clear that river management is getting more and more integrated in Romania. Different functions are included now, such as flood protection, urban and economic development, leisure and recreation. But in relation to this case the impression is that still more attention could be paid at the ecological function in future plans.

List of separate appendices

These documents are available on request.

1. List of participants
2. Description of site visit
3. PPT of
 - a. Martin Janes: *National River Restoration Centres; the UK experience*
 - b. Josu Elso: *CIREF; Iberian Centre for River restoration*
 - c. Wim Zeeman: *WFD and River Restoration practise in the Netherlands*
 - d. Mihai Costache/Elena Tuchia: *River restoration and Integrated River Basin Management Planning in Romania*
 - e. Bart Fokkens: *ECRR, Network of Practitioners of Ecological River Restoration*
 - f. Graziella Jula: *The Redevelopment of the Danube River on the Romanian Sector*
4. Frequent asked questions

