

WETNET PROJECT
Coordinated management and networking of Mediterranean wetlands

WP 2 - Communication

Activity 2.7 – External event report

Project Partner: Italian Centre for River Restoration (CIRF)

Date: September, 27th – 29th 2018

Deliverable 2.7.1 - Event Report
River Summit

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1 Event Details

Title:

River Summit

Type:

Conference

Date:

27-29/09/2018

Location:

Sarajevo (Bosnia-Erzegovina)

Programme:

See link below and annex 1.

Link:

<https://riverwatch.eu/en/content/river-summit>

Audience:

about 250 people from over 30 countries

WetNet participation:

- Giancarlo Gusmaroli (Italian Centre for River Restoration)

2 Description of the Event

Between September 27th and 29th, Sarajevo became the center of European river conservationists and dam opponents. At the first European Rivers Summit, about 250 people from over 30 countries discussed how to stop the destruction of Europe's rivers from hydropower, how to protect the last free-flowing river jewels in the long run and how to restore those already destroyed (a full list of topics can be found in the Summit Program).

Participants formulated a list of demands addressed to relevant decision makers in politics and industry. In this declaration, Europe's river conservationists call upon the European Commission, the Energy Community, international banks and national governments to stop promoting and funding hydropower projects as green and renewable energy source and tighten environmental criteria. These demands aim to help the successful implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in order to bring rivers back to a good ecological state by 2027.

The First European Rivers Summit was carried out by Riverwatch (Austria) and the Center for Environment (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and organized within the framework of a newly formed alliance of several European NGOs with the purpose to save Europe's rivers and stop the dams. These organisations include Riverwatch, EuroNatur, WWF Adria, Wetlands International, and Rios livres (GEOTA) from Portugal.

FULL PROGRAMME:

https://riverwatch.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/EuropeanRiversDays/ERS%202018%20-%20Final%20Program_NEW.pdf

3 Relevance for the WetNet Project and the MED territory

ABSTRACT OF THE PRESENTATION

River Contract: a voluntary tool for river protection

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The anthropic activities developed along fluvial corridors in many cases have led to a severe alteration of water quality, an increasing exposure to hydrogeological risks and a consistent landscape degradation. As for the first two, the EU legal framework (mainly Water and Flood Directives) provides strategies and methods to be implemented by Member States, but landscape qualities - that encompass human communities as key asset of the territorial values - still remain poorly addressed.

In order to face the complexity that underpin the functionality of a river system, appropriate governance processes should be pursued. In particular inclusive and collaborative agreements at

catchment scale, based on the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, might play a crucial role in facilitating an effective community-based river management.

The River Contract (RC) is a voluntary-based inclusive tool for strategic and negotiated planning, whose main scope is the protection and better management of water resources, the enhancement of river landscape and the mitigation of flood risk, contributing to the local development (Italian Environment Code, 2006, mod. 2015).

Since the early 2000s, RCs has been implemented in Italy - following the former French experience of Contrats de Rivière which began in the 80s -, first in the Northern regions and then in most of the other Italian regions, with different approaches and outputs (Gusmaroli, 2013). The RC can represent an effective approach to systematise issues treated separately so far. Implementing a RC at (sub)catchment scale means to operationalize the principle of community participation envisaged by the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Through the literature review of some RC cases, it emerges that successful water management programs/projects related to improvement of landscape quality are closely linked to the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) design.

As a matter of fact, GBI is deemed to address both water management and landscape enhancement at the regional level (i.e. the establishment of river parks) and at the local scale (i.e. the re-naturalization of river corridors and the implementation of Natural Based Solutions) (D'Ascanio, 2018).

In France - where the RC is a consolidated tool - a wide range of river management programs has been planned for the years to come through the implementation of RCs, focusing on ecological continuity restoration (incl. dam removal).

4 Concluding Remarks

Today, rivers are the most threatened habitats on Earth. 81% of global freshwater wildlife populations have been lost - higher than in any other ecosystem. According to the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) European waterways are degraded to a point where they can no longer sustain functioning ecosystems.

A final declaration has been released by summit participants, including the following recommendation for EU Heads of State that acknowledge the contribution of WetNet project to the debate:

- *To ensure the active participation of stakeholders and the public in the early stages of planning and in the management of river basins, according to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.*
- *To ensure full transparency of Water Framework Directive implementation, to provide open and accessible information and education for the public, and to make use of citizen science for the generation of data on water management issues and characteristics of the river basins.*

5 Photo Gallery



1ST EUROPEAN RIVERS SUMMIT

Where European river fighters meet

JOIN THIS UNIQUE EVENT

3 DAYS FOR ACTIVISTS, NGOS, EXPERTS, FISHERMEN AND OTHER RIVER LOVERS.

September 27-29, 2018
Sarajevo,
Bosnia-Herzegovina

Special event on 29th:
 open-air concert
 for the Blue Heart of Europe.

 RiverWatch

 euRONATUR

 Wetlands INTERNATIONAL

 Centar za životnu sredinu

 RIOS LIVRES
GEOTA

 WWF



River Contracts: a voluntary tool for river protection

Romina D'Ascanio / Italy / Università Roma Tre and Giancarlo Gusmaroli / Italy / CIRF - Italian Centre for River Restoration

[Presentation](#) | [Summary](#)

ANNEX 1 - Event Programme

Program schedule

Location: [Hotel Saraj](#), Nevjestina 5, 71000 Sarajevo, BiH

Thursday, Sep 27 The situation of European rivers

14:00 – 14:25 Welcome by moderator Enes Cerimagic and introduction to the situation of rivers in the host country by Natasa Crnkovic / *Center for Environment*

14:25 – 14:55 The Situation of Balkan Rivers: Save the Blue Heart of Europe - *Ulrich Eichelmann/Riverwatch, Gabriel Schwaderer/EuroNatur Foundation*

15:00 – 16:00 Your River – your fight: Participants present their struggles or success stories (1/2)

16:00 – 16:30 COFFEE and NETWORKING BREAK

16:30 – 18:00 Your River – your fight: Participants present their struggles or success stories (2/2)

BREAK

18:30 – 20:00 DINNER

20:00 Film Screening „[Blue Heart](#)“ (Patagonia) & Discussion

Friday, Sep 28 Driving forces for the dam craze and how to counteract

Each presentation is followed by 10 minutes of Q&A

09:00 – 09:30 Follow the money: Who is financing the dam boom? Banks and state subsidies – *Pippa Gallop and Igor Vejnovic/ CEE Bankwatch Network*

09:40 – 10:10 Small isn't beautiful: about small dams in the Balkans – *Mato Gotovac/ WWF Adria*

10:20 – 10:50 Hydropower Projects in Western Balkans - possible legal actions– *Malgorzata Smolak/ Client Earth*

11:00 – 11:30 Water Framework Directive: What's going on in Brussels regarding river policies? – *Eef Silver/Wetlands International*

11:40 – 13:00 LUNCH

11:40 – 13:00	LUNCH
13:00 – 14:00	Ideas Corner: Participants present their ideas for free rivers (1/2)
14:00 – 15:45	Workshops on the topics of the day
15:45 – 16:30	COFFEE and NETWORKING BREAK
16:30 – 17:30	De-growth economy: How to stop climate change without destroying our nature? – <i>Prof. Dr. Niko Paech/environmental economist – Video conference + Discussion</i>
BREAK	
18:30 – 20:00	DINNER
20:00	DRINKS IN THE CITY at the Pivnica HS (Franjevačka 15, 71000 Sarajevo, BiH)

Saturday, Sep 29 Alternatives to Hydropower and Visions

Each presentation is followed by 10 minutes of Q&A

09:00 -09:40	Dam Removal Europe and AMBER: reconnecting European Rivers – <i>Jeroen van Herk/Dam Removal Europe and Ruedi Bösiger/WWF Switzerland</i>
09:50 – 10:20	The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act: Vision for protection of European rivers – <i>John Zablocki/ The Nature Conservancy and David Moryc /American Rivers</i>
10:30 – 10:50	Introducing the Eco-Masterplan for Balkan Rivers – <i>Ulrich Eichelmann/Riverwatch</i>
11:00 – 11:45	The brave women of Kruščica: their story
11:45 – 13:00	LUNCH
13:00 – 14:30	Workshops on the topics of the day
14:30 – 16:00	Visual Action with all participants and artist Luka Tomac
16:00 – 16:30	COFFEE and NETWORKING BREAK
16:30 – 17:00	Memorandum Vote
17:00 – 18:00	Ideas Corner: Participants present their ideas for free rivers (2/2)

Ideas Corner: Participants present their ideas for free rivers (1/2)

Friday, 13:00 – 14:00

- Free Rivers School – *Vera Knook / Netherlands / River Intellectuals, Balkan River Defence*
- Want to Save Your River? The global Waterkeeper Alliance wants to help you! – *Gary Wockner / USA / Waterkeeper Alliance*
- How the rivers changed my life! – *Pascal Rösler / Germany / Pure Water for Generations*
- 2018 Vjosa canoe scientific expedition – opportunities for a river and its residents - *Aurélien Rateau / France / Destination rivières*
- River Contracts: a voluntary tool for river protection – *Romina D’Ascanio / Italy / Università Roma Tre and Giancarlo Gusmaroli / Italy / CIRF - Italian Centre for River Restoration*