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Introduction

Dear readers,

Herewith you receive the first ECRR newsletter of 2013; which promises to be a very interesting year indeed. In September this year ECRR, in close cooperation with the ICPDR and the RESTORE project will organize the 5th European River restoration Conference.

In this edition you can find more info about this event, that will take place in Vienna.

Apart from that, again the newsletter offers you interesting knowledge, information, an overview of activities and events.

You will find articles about the stakeholder workshop of the REFORM project, earlier this year in Brussels; as well as about the closing event of the MEANDER project in Croatia.

In addition, recent information about the RESTORE project is presented.

A short article is written about the ECRR kick of seminar at Lyon, where representatives of 5 pilot basins met to start a Community of Practice as follow up activity of the WWF6.

We are planning to prepare a special Newsletter edition about the main findings and results of this seminar later this year.

The ECRR is reflecting on its future, the board thereto started to investigate possible options for our strategy, during a two day workshop meeting in the Hague earlier this year.

Issues to be discussed and need clarification are how to organize our network, how to facilitate it, if and how membership could be set up, and how the ECRR secretariat has to be organized.

In the next ECRR Newsletter, the latest developments will be outlined in a special article

Furthermore, an article about the new to be established National Centre for River Restoration in Poland is presented. As usual a list of new events coming up is also incorporated.

I wish you pleasant readings.

Hil R. Kuypers
Secretary ECRR



REFORM Stakeholder Workshop on River Restoration, Brussels

On 26 and 27 February 2013, around 110 participants attended the **Stakeholder Workshop on River Restoration to Support Effective Catchment Management** of the REFORM project (www.reformrivers.eu) in Brussels. Twenty-three European countries, including national administrations and other stakeholder groups, were represented.

REFORM is a four-year (2012-2015) EU-funded FP7 research project whose main aim is to make the state-of-the-art knowledge on hydromorphology, the interaction with ecology and ecosystem services of stream, river and floodplain ecosystems, timely available to support river basin managers in preparing River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).

This workshop was the main external event in the first phase of the REFORM project, providing a platform for consultation and exchange between REFORM scientists, European technical experts working on river degradation and restoration, and members of the Working Group A Ecological Status (ECOSTAT) of the Common Implementation Strategy of the WFD.

The first results of REFORM were presented and invited experts had the opportunity to give feedback. One of the goals was to gather stakeholders' perspectives on how

the management tools and approaches created by the project can contribute to the next round of RBMPs.

13 keynote speakers gave wide-ranging points of view. Presentations were given by the REFORM partners, the leaders of the WG ECOSTAT, the EEA, DG Environment of the European Commission, the WISER project, and the Life+ RESTORE project, among others. Presentations held in the plenary sessions addressed:

- Feedback on assessment methods and measures for river restoration in the first RBMPs
- Strengths and limitations of hydromorphological assessment methods
- Methods for understanding the root causes of hydromorphological degradation
- Tools for assessing the effectiveness of restoration for river basin planning considering project scale and catchment status
- Discussion of a European multi-scale ecohydromorphological assessment framework
- Knowledge sharing on hydromorphological degradation and restoration
- Dissemination of information from related European research projects and activities (e.g. of the EEA, the European Commission, the Life+ RESTORE project) and their relationship to REFORM

The workshop followed an interactive format with parallel sessions addressing different types of European rivers (highland/midland, lowland and Mediterranean river systems) and topics (impact of hydromorphological pressures in multiple-pressure settings; designing programmes of measures; heavily modified water bodies).

The REFORM stakeholder workshop has provided a very good model of early two-way communication between an EU research project and water managers. Participants supported this type of further interaction to remain informed about the REFORM research results and provide their feedback.

A summary report on the key conclusions & recommendations of the workshop will be available by the end of April 2013 on the workshop website (<http://www.reformrivers.eu/events/stakeholder-workshop>). Additional information on the workshop (discussion paper, programme, presentations) is already available online. For further information on the REFORM Stakeholder Workshop, please contact: *Eleftheria Kampa* (at eleftheria.kampa@ecologic.eu) (Ecologic Institute) or *Tom Buijse* (at Tom.Buijse@deltares.nl) (Deltares).



Restoring Europe's Rivers:

Report on a lunchtime seminar, held in Brussels on the 27th of February 2013

A lunchtime seminar examined how Europe is working to re-connect river channels with their natural floodplains. Project manager Toni Scarr kicked off the event with an overview of the RESTORE Life+ project and introduced two case studies from Belgium and Northern France. The video presentations from the seminar are now available on the RESTORE website www.restorerivers.eu

Rivers provide many services and restoration can significantly increase those provided by a **healthy ecosystem**. We need to rethink our relationship with rivers. As cities have grown and agricultural practices have developed we have culverted, diverted and polluted our rivers. Those were some of the key messages to emerge from ECOSTAT seminar in Brussels on 25th of Feb 2013, looking at the benefits of restoring natural river processes.

'Over the past ten years, Europe suffered more than 175 major floods, causing deaths, the displacement of people and large economic losses. At the same time drought is increasing across Europe with the number of countries affected almost doubling between 1971 to 2011.' (EEA, key facts 2010 and 2012).

RESTORE project manager Toni Scarr kicked off by outlining that river restoration is all about working with the natural process of the river. This is not only the channel itself but also the floodplain and from the river source right out to where it meets the sea. Lessons can be learned from work being done in giving people greater access to wildlife and breaking down previously dislocated riverside buildings from the water, cutting down walls and improving connections. She noted that restoration of rivers through urban green space have seen increased use of that space, better flood protection, increased access and associated improvements include a reduction in the fear of crime.

The talk finished by showing the RESTORE repository of information about river restoration: Website, RiverWiki.



The Tortoise - Le Parc de la Deûle – copyright



Yves Hubert, principal designer at Joining Nature and Cities discussed a site near Lille that had problems with low flows, poor water quality supporting a limited diversity of wildlife. They wanted to create a 'living environment', increase the value of the landscape and develop access and recreation associated with the river. So they re-profiled the river, created backwaters and addressed the water quality issues. They also improve the access to the site and the river. He discussed benefits such as natural water treatment, flood risk management, recreation activities such as walking and fishing but also much more diverse habitats. Where previously they had no waterfowl now the ducks were enjoying themselves!

We learnt about cross boarder collaboration on the Meuse from Katia Nagels. She described an international river rehabilitation project which aims to restore the natural river processes.

This project spans Flanders and the Netherlands, she emphasised the importance of collaboration where rivers do not 'recognise' our borders. She also asked for better join up between European Directives influencing water management and improving nature conservation. Her work looked at creating natural riverine landscapes, including replacing gravel beds in the rivers, removing engineered bank protection and creating wet woodland and flower rich grasslands in the floodplain. The river had become degraded from decades of intensive agriculture, gravel extraction and separation of the river from its floodplain.



Katia Nagels Agency for Nature and Forests

Following these seminars we have published a guide **for planners, developers and architects on maximising the benefits of river restoration**. Rivers by Design illustrates the crucial role that planners, architects and developers can play in achieving sustainable development that meets the needs of local people and the local environment through river restoration.

more information:

antonia.scarr@environment-agency.gov.uk

WWF6 pilot basins seminar: follow up activities started in Lyon

As a result of the 2012 WWF6 session organised by ECRR, the following target was formulated about the development of new knowledge and know how on rivers hydro-morphology, restoration and protection of water ecosystems :

By 2015, evidence based developed best practices of ecological restoration measures and land use planning are adopted by at least 3 integrated river basin management plans



There to, it was decided that four sub targets were to be further elaborated in pilot basins:

- Land use and land banking: as tool to be implemented for integrated river basin management
- Best practices: a designed web based tool 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 stakeholder involvement: to assess the effects of public education on awareness raising on ecological functioning of rivers
- Sustainable tourism: to develop criteria for "good cases" of integrating sustainable tourism development in land in water management planning.

Committed pilot basins.

A number of basins have shown interest to be a pilot basin for the implementation of the targets and to disseminate their findings.

These basins are:

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

The kick off seminar of WWF6 follow up activities, organized by ECRR, and hosted by the Agence de L' Eau, Rhône, Méditerranée & Corse, took place in Lyon France, from March 19-22, 2013. This first event marks the start of active cooperation between 5 pilots, which all decide to continue sharing experiences and best practices by establishing a Community of Practices (CoP).

In September 2013, during the international ECRR/ICPDR/RESTORE conference in Vienna, it is foreseen that the draft results of the different target pilots, e.g. the progress of action plans of the river basin organisations will be communicated and present-



ed, at a side event.

ECRR will prepare a special newsletter about this *kick off seminar* and findings of this new activity and the CoP that has been started. More information is also to be found on the website ECRR.org

Hil Kuypers.



The 5th European River Restoration Conference

The ECRR is currently working on preparations for the 5th European River Restoration Conference. This will take place 11-13 September 2013, Vienna, Austria. It will provide all those working on river restoration at various levels a great opportunity to share experiences and learn about the successes and challenges of river restoration, from all over Europe, and beyond. Register on the website to receive our monthly e-newsletter and announcements. You can find our first e-newsletter on the bespoke conference website at www.errc2013.eu.

Partners

We are excited to inform you that we have gathered the support of a number of leading organisations.

The European Water Partnership, Global Water Partnership, International Network of Basin Organisations, IW: Learn, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Rivers Network and Wetlands International all declared their intentions to become official partners to support and promote the Conference. Partnership agreements are expected to be signed in the coming weeks. If you are interested in becoming a partner, you can find more info at in the [Sponsorship Proposal Package](#) or contact us at [ERRC2013 Organization Office](#).

Present your case study

A steadily growing number of submissions have been handed in, instilling us with high expectations for an exciting program! More submissions are still welcome, so seize this opportunity to showcase your river restoration case to an international audience.

If you are considering a submission, here are a few tips and tricks:

- We encourage submissions (such as case studies and presentations that cover topics from policy to monitoring) that link to our [eleven conference themes](#), and inspire 'how to do'. Don't let our list of themes deter you! You do not need to stick to the themes so strictly that it is a barrier to making a submission, these should be seen as the outlines of potential topics. When in doubt, [contact us!](#)
- Sessions can have different formats, so propose submissions that include discussion or interaction with the audience. We are also happy to receive more traditional pres-

entations. Be imaginative - instead of PowerPoint why not a [short film](#) or maybe try a Vox Pop (short interviews) to incorporate views from outside the conference. We also welcome poster submission summaries. Posters selected for the conference will need to be printed (maximum 95 x 205 cm). There is a prize for the best posters at the conference!

- In your submission please include a title and short description of the topic and format of the presentation (250 words approximately). When drafting a submission, consider the key challenges; your main messages; the aspects of your submission you would like to discuss.

The submission review panel includes experts from around Europe, including representatives from [CIREF \(Spain\)](#), [CIRF \(Italy\)](#), [Environment Agency \(England & Wales\)](#), [River Restoration Centre \(UK\)](#), [SYKE \(Finland\)](#), [DLG \(NL\)](#) and [Wetlands International](#). The review panel will inventory and examine all submissions, and fit these into facilitated workshops and other session formats.

Early birds can [register here now](#) for a reduced fee of €250. The conference will provide:

- exciting examples of practical efforts to restore the natural state and functioning of rivers and how this has improved flood risk management, river ecology, and supported green infrastructure and community development. Several sites along the Danube will be visited on inspiring field trip excursions.
- exchange of expertise – about River Restoration from expert presentations, field trips to restoration sites, and workshop sessions.
- valuable networking opportunities – the ideal platform to meet and share ideas with like minded professionals and practitioners involved in the protection and restoration of Europe's rivers.

Key conference dates approaching

Don't forget the following key dates:

15 April – Deadline for session and poster proposals and case study summaries. [Read more](#)

15 May – Deadline for early bird registration. [Register here](#)



Celebrating Successes and Addressing Challenges
5th edition | 11-13 September 2013 | Vienna



Capacity building for Hydromorphological monitoring and River restoration

measures in Croatia

The Republic of Croatia is on the threshold of entering the EU. During 2011 and 2012 a government to government project was executed by Croatian and Dutch water experts. The main target of the project was to develop capacity for designing and implementing measures in the River Basin Management Plans to improve hydro morphological features of Croatian river systems. Integrated river restoration is considered as a promising tool to improve the hydro morphology of river systems and meet the objectives of the WFD, Birds, Habitat and Flood directives.



As elsewhere in the EU (see project RESTORE and REFORM in this newsletter), but certainly in Croatia, theoretical and practical experience in the field of hydro morphology is generally lacking.

The deliverables of the project consisted of (i) an accepted methodology and trained staff for hydromorphological monitoring and assessment (incl. guidelines) and (ii) a guideline to define and plan river restoration measures.



The monitoring component of the project delivered a Training of Trainers programme (17 persons trained) and a guideline describing the process of data collection, the preparation and execution of field surveys, the application of protocols and factsheets and an implementation strategy.



Figure 1. Schematic development process component 2 with relations between various activities and deliverables.

The guideline regarding river restoration plans and measures describes the context of river management planning, a stepwise approach to design a plan, background information, examples and experiences in surrounding countries and listed links and literature. (figure 2). Currently, it draws the state of the art for Croatia, however future experiences should be integrated. The guideline is therefore a living document!

A strong interaction between the domains of planning measures and monitoring is needed to develop hydromorphological knowledge and experience. Familiarity with relevant references

of hydro morphological conditions for riverine ecosystems and/or locations/sites is needed to develop and plan sustainable river restoration measures. Strategic hydro morphological monitoring is needed to build up this knowledge

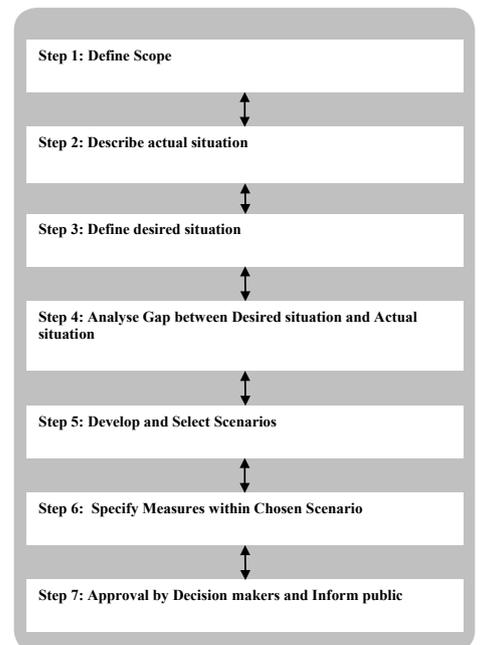


Figure 2: Seven steps for creating a River Restoration Plan.



base, which is critical to set targets and assess the measures and evaluate effects.

Before and after the implementation of measures hydro morphological data should be collected to evaluate their impacts and efficiency. This information can be used to cyclically develop the guidelines, obviously according to the EU-standards. In addition, the continuous need to collect and analyse information about the relevant ecosystems at these locations enables the development and design of site specific monitoring strategies. Consequently, it is necessary to define and assess the relevant monitoring features and parameters for these sites and to develop an up-dated training program and implementation strategy for Croatia.

At the end of the project an inter-institutional interdisciplinary expert working group was proposed, focusing on exchanging river

restoration knowledge and experiences. Furthermore this group may enhance integrated river-restoration concepts in river management planning during the coming years in Croatia.



In the nearby future both the guidelines will be published and can be downloaded via the websites of Croatian Waters (<http://www.voda.hr/Default.aspx?sec=115>) and the State Institute for Nature Protection (<http://www.dzpz.hr/eng/>).

More information:

Dagmar Surmanovic (Croatian Waters),
 Dagmar.Surmanovic@voda.hr; ,
 Klaas Jan Douben (regional Water Authority Brabantse Delta)
 k.douben@brabantsedelta.nl; and
 Wim Zeeman (Dutch Government service for Land and Water management, DLG) w.p.c.zeeman@dlg.nl

European Centre for River Restoration – Network in Poland

Since a number of river restoration projects has been recently implemented in Poland and – simultaneously - numerous questions arose in regard with the ongoing river degradation due to river treatment (so called “conservation of channels” and “river unblocking”), a group of activists established a Polish network of knowledge-transfer supported by the ECRR. The first meeting of the group was held on 12th of February 2012. Since then three meetings in an approximate 6-month interval were arranged. So far the Division of Hydrology and Water Resources of the Department of Hydraulic Engineering, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW) under the lead of Prof. Tomasz Okruszko was responsible for the organized meetings and M.Sc. Mateusz Grygoruk remained a contact person of the network so far. In two of the meetings

(12.02.2012 and 07.06.2012) the members of the ECRR Board were present – Bart Fokkens (Wetlands International) and Jukka Jormola (SYKE).

It was considered among the numerous partners of the network, that it is compulsory to arrange the platform of



knowledge transfer between the specialists and practitioners of river ecosystems’ management and restoration, as there are many valuable initiatives ongoing in the country. However, the network of specialists has so far not only considered the cutting edge practices of river restoration, but also focused at problems of river degradation. It was observed in numerous regions of Poland, that the ongoing river treatment – excavation of river bottom, initiatives aimed at dam construction and thus – blocking rivers for migratory fish as well as degradation of aquatic ecosystems became a serious problem in ecosystem management and environmental conservation. The national-scale problem of river degradation appears therefore to be one of the most important topics in a national-scale discussion on river conservation, as there are still some unique

rivers that hold the status of near-natural ecosystems.

During the last meeting of the network organized on 14-15th of January 2013, we have discussed the "Perfect world of

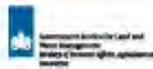


river conservation in Poland" in reference to the experience of guests from Austria and Flanders. At the meeting we hosted specialists from universities, NGOs and scientific institutes (more than 40 participants: hydrologists, ecologists, ichthyologists, planners, engineers, environmental managers). It was revealed, that the term "river conservation" is frequently misused (e.g. some cases were presented, where river straightening and treatment followed by ecosystem degradation was referred to as "conservation"). We revealed, that there is an urgent need of interaction between the "theory" and "practice" in river conservation in Poland, especially due to

the implementation and requirements of Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000. We hope to start this interaction on behalf of the ECRR network in 2013.

So far the Polish network is awaiting soon to become an official ECRR National Network, Some new activities of the network have already been planned and some new discussion panels are coming soon. Please contact Mateusz Grygoruk (m.grygoruk@levis.sggw.pl) in order to get the newest information on the network's activities in Poland.

Mateusz Grygoruk



Restoring Europe's Rivers

Press release

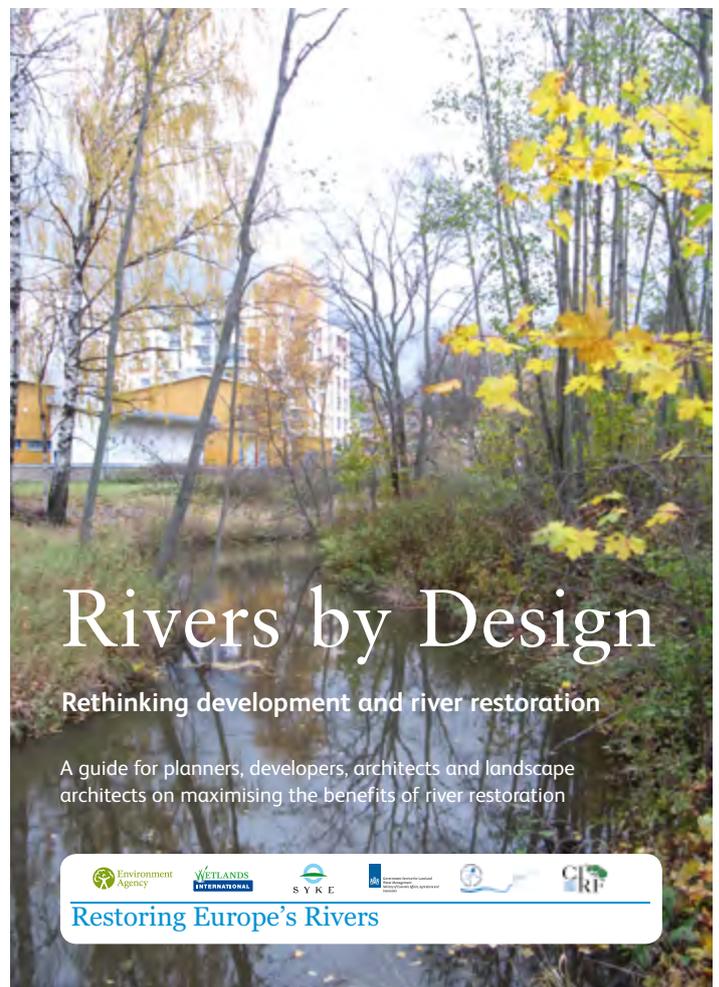
Rethinking development and river restoration - A guide for planners, developers, architects and landscape architects

Rivers by Design is a new guide for planners, developers, architects and landscape architects. Using a series of inspirational case studies it shows development professionals the crucial role they can play in meeting the needs of people and the environment through river restoration.

The guide offers practical advice and step-by-step help on restoring our rivers. It also illustrates how working with the natural environment makes economic and environmental sense. Case studies from Korea to Milton Keynes demonstrate that well located, planned and designed development can increase ecological quality, reduce flood risk and create social and economic benefits such as improved recreational facilities and public spaces.

Rivers by Design has been written by RESTORE, a partnership for sharing knowledge and promoting best practice on river restoration in Europe. It is freely available for download from the RESTORE website. [Download Rivers by Design](#)

For more information please visit our [website](#) or contact Susan Sheahan: email restore@environment-agency.gov.uk



Events calendar For events in other continents please consult the website

Date/periode	Titel/issue	Location	Links
30-April 2013	RRC annual network conference	Nothamptonshire; UK	http://www.restoreivers.eu/NewsEvents/
22 -24 May 2013	7th International Conference On River Basin Management	New Forest, UK	http://www.wessex.ac.uk/13-conferences/river-basin-management-2013.html
22- May 2013	Field visits to river restoration projects in Germany and Switzerland	Munich, Germany	http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc_restore.php
8-9 June 2013	Wild Trout Trust Get-Together 2013	Dartmoor UK	http://www.wildtrout.org/
5-9 Aug 2013	3d Biennal Symposium International Society River Science	Beijing, China	http://www.2013isrs.org
18 Aug 2013	11th Intecol International Congress Of Ecology	London, UK	http://intecol2013.org/
27-08-2013	The 8th International Conference on Geomorphology of the International Association of Geomorphologis	Paris; France	http://www.geomorphology-iag-paris2013.com
11-13 Sept 2013	5th European River Restoration Conference	Vienna, Aut	www.ERRC2013.eu
6-11 oct 2013	5th World Conference on Ecological Restoration	Madison (US)	http://www.ser2013.org
15 Okt 2013	Hymo Restoration of Rivers	Namur, Belgium	http://www.colloque.walphy.be
4 - 8 Nov 2013	International Water Week (IWW)	Amsterdam, Ne	http://www.internationalwaterweek.com/

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.

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, and click contact.

