

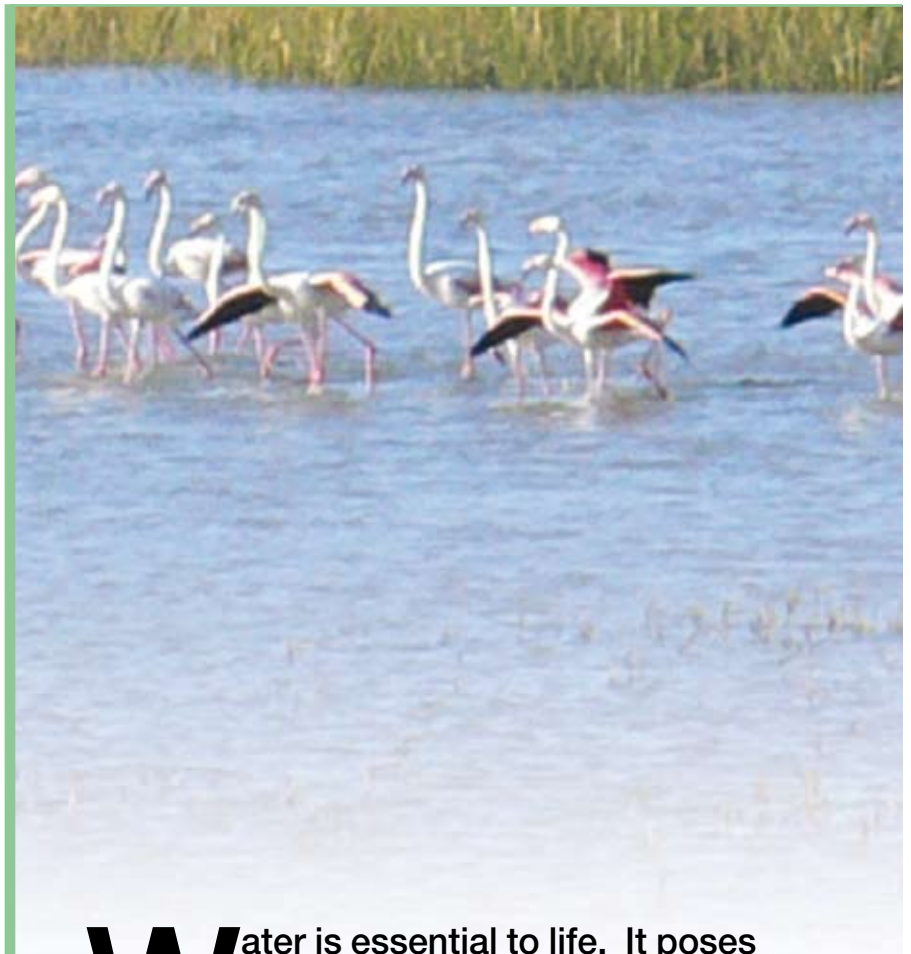
May 2007

Editorial

Water is life. Life was born from water. Without water there is no life. Even if the oceans seem to have an infinite reserve of water for the needs of the biosphere, water - in the oceans or in the rivers - is under threat. A part of the water cycle involves water flowing over the continents. Interaction with the lithosphere produces the soil that nourishes vegetation. It is not streams but infiltration and percolation which feed the ground water. A part runs off into the sea and transports the products of erosion. The cycle is a major contributor to climate, but nowadays our climate is disturbed and water is becoming an increasingly precious resource to man. The lack of water is paradoxically linked to more flooding and freak weather. This allows us to better understand why the European Union needs to intervene. We must supply real solutions and our governments can no longer afford to get bogged down in pseudo-debates with political overtones. Farming cannot continue to remove between 25% and 75% of river water, depending on the country, if we do not want to see other disasters like that of the River Amou Daria... On the other hand GMO crops which require less water must be accepted. Secondly, farming needs to be developed in temperate zones such as Europe where irrigation is less necessary. But this development will mean going beyond the objectives of the CAP. The critical water situation justifies the introduction of soil protection strategies of creating terraces and replanting hedgerows and broadleaf trees so that their roots stabilize the soil, and of minimizing fertilizer use, as well as looking towards the major hope represented by GMOs. We who cherish environmental values do not fear this debate; to go beyond the CAP is to imagine the role of tomorrow's agriculture being shared between food, energy and the environment.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

New parameters to take into account in the management of water resources



Water is essential to life. It poses questions not only at the global level but also at European level, as much in political, economic and social terms as technical.

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Publisher :

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

Chief editor :

Emmanuelle MIKOSZ

Rue de Trèves, 67

B - 1040 Bruxelles

Tel. : 00 32 (0)2 234 30 00

Fax : 00 32 (0)2 234 30 09

countryside@elo.org

Internet Site :

www.elo.org

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Its use by man is mainly based on food and non-food production, energy and transport. A number of natural phenomena or human actions can have an affect on its availability or quality. It is therefore not surprising that water has from very early on been the object of special attention from the EU, in order to protect it and ensure its optimal use.

Water has therefore been the object of an exhaustive sectoral approach, and a series of tools have since then been designed at the Community level : namely, the Water Framework Directive (2000/16 CE), and the related directives, concerning drinking water (98/83 CE), groundwater (2006/16 CE) and bathing water (2006/7 CE), as well as the Nitrates Directive, which deal with the global aspects of water management, especially the technical and health aspects.

In addition to these vertical processes, even if taking into account the interactions between the environments and the different media is not something new, this has clearly been integrated into a series of recent horizontal processes of the European Union, notably the recently adopted thematic strategies for the environment, such as the thematic strategies for soil protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of pesticides.

By way of current developments relating to water, one can obviously point to, in the first place, the successive enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007. The arrival of these new Member States has moved back the borders of the Union, and the future accessions envisaged will continue this process. Of course, not only the territories but also the rivers and seas have a major importance. The existing agreements, such as that

concerning the river Danube, will see themselves strengthened by the change in status of these new countries become members of the Union. In addition, their accession commits them to the « *acquis communautaire* », which requires that the body of laws, including environmental legislation and notably those concerning water management, must be integrated into the national corpus of legislation.

One must also make mention of the Natura 2000 network, stemming from the Birds and Habitats Directives, and a powerful tool for biodiversity protection at the disposal of the Union and its Member States, which in particular concerns habitats linked to freshwater, and which will from now on extend to marine environments. The marine habitats and species of Community interest are currently being identified by scientists and Member States, and the procedure for designating these sites should be able to begin soon. The link with the other existing tools will need to be made, not least with the Common Fisheries Policy. This element is particularly important with regard to fishing near estuaries, and migratory marine species, such as the salmon, which could see its protection strengthened on the migratory route from the sea, to the estuary and its river breeding-ground.

The much sought-after objective, through European level intervention concerning water in these various processes, is at the same time a better long term management of the resource, a better coordination of the actions of the Member States, and a better anticipation of the risks. The transnational characteristic of water resources gives rise to necessary and effective cooperation with regard to the management and use of water. This cooperation will be useful particularly with regard to the third current devel-



opment affecting water, namely climate change.

Presently receiving extensive media coverage, the phenomenon of climate change directly affects European citizens. We are no longer talking about technical dossiers scarcely comprehensible to the general public, but concrete and visible phenomena, such as drought, changes in rainfall patterns and precipitation, or indeed devastating floods, such as the recent floods in central Europe and the south of France. Whether this involves occasional or cyclical phenomena or a lasting change in the climate, the risks facing the populations and their property are real, with their frequency potentially increased; and these worrying parameters are well understood by European citizens. The policy demand is clear: properly taking the risk into account must entail measures for the avoidance and management of these risks. The European policy response has taken place notably through the recent « Floods » Directive of 25th

April 2007, which has as its objective to offset the risks of flooding and to protect populations and their property.

Owners of private property hope that this new directive enables the local parameters of rural businesses and rural properties to be better taken into account than they are by the old national flood-plans. Certain situations have been highlighted by ELO, particularly after the floods in the South of France, in which some plans favoured the solution offered by flood plains in the case of flooding, in preference to the solution of a rapid flow towards the river mouths, an alternative which would have required work on the river-courses. Even if some flood plains may prove to be useful, the upsurge of the phenomenon of flooding makes an increased and disproportionate risk weigh heavily upon the area in question, where often a rural business activity already exists, especially as these floods often carry along pollution harmful for subsequent activity. This type of specific question will

obviously need to be dealt with if we want a coherent management of the risk connected with water and natural disasters.

The question of the link between climate change and water has enabled the raising of awareness among all categories of the European population, whether the general public, children, the media, professionals, or researchers : the resource is precious, and must therefore be used advisedly. Climatic changes induce land managers to an optimisation of the available resources, that is to say, to a modification of the type of crops according to the climate and the water consumption anticipated for the production. Scientific research could have an important impact here, with GMOs less thirsty for water. As for the question of water pricing, this obviously must not hinder the profitability and the viability of farms. ELO participates in several working groups aiming to protect water resources, as well in numerous policy sessions on water, such as the recent conference on water which was held in Brussels on 22nd and 23rd March 2007 (www.water.europa.eu).

An optimal management of water resources, taking into account the new climatic parameters needs to be found in each Member State, in order to preserve its availability and its quality for the different uses which our modern consumer societies make of it, whether regarding its basic functions, or its functions in both food and non-food production, energy, transport, and even recreation.

■ Marie-Alice BUDNIOK

The European Conference «Time to Adapt! – Climate Change and the European Water Dimension»

12 -14 February 2007 in Berlin

«New Germany – Tropical nights in Bavaria...», «Up and down – The global weather is going crazy....», «Ski lifts relegated to museum pieces»

Such headlines have appeared in the papers in Germany in recent weeks - which have been far too warm for autumn and winter - and in connection with the publication of the new IPCC report ten days ago.

With these words, the Minister for the Environment and President of the EU-Council of Ministers for the Environment, Sigmar GABRIEL, opened the symposium «Time to Adapt! – Climate Change and the European Water Dimension» on 12th February 2007, which took place during the German presidency.

250 participants from 24 EU member states, from Switzerland and Norway, as well as from European and international organizations attended the two-day congress in Berlin. They discussed the expected effects of climate change on the water balance and on water supply and distribution. They especially addressed the water-dependent sectors, i.e. agriculture, electricity, inland navigation and tourism.

The IPCC-report has shown it clearly: climate change is occurring, and its effects will become more and more extreme. The rise in temperature and its effects on water supply and distribution are of great importance.

Climate change leads to glacier-melt, to sea-level rise and to changing patterns of rainfall distribution. The consequences are well known: increase of extremely high water floods, longer periods of drought,



limitation of water resources and even changes in water quality, and finally implications for animal habitats and species.

The aim of the symposium was to formulate recommendations with regard to the respective positions in the EU, taking into account water supply and distribution not being able to cope with the new conditions.

The Minister for the Environment pointed out that «Even if we succeed - and we must succeed! - in quickly implementing all climate protection measures under discussion and restricting a further increase in the global temperature to 2°C, we will nevertheless have to face the consequences of climate change that are already all but inevitable». Regarding water supply and distribution, this means better preparation for extreme events that we will be facing in the future (floods and

droughts) and the need to protect water resources and to use water sustainably.

The European support program offers Member States options for promoting adaptation measures. The Director-General of the Commission's DG Environment, Mogens Peter CARL, stressed, «We already have many instruments at European level which the Member States can use. However, we must ensure that existing legislation is applied optimally to reduce climate impacts. For example, farmers could be given even more encouragement to reduce consumption. The CAP can also make an even greater contribution in this regard. Furthermore, the European Commission is considering a range of additional measures, for example a Europe-wide initiative on saving water in all other areas such as private households and industry.»

The Commission has announced a green paper on adaptation, as well as a communication to the Council and European Parliament on water scarcity and drought before the end of the year. The symposium served as an important platform for collaboration between water supply and distribution and politics, and for discussing the approaches to one of the greatest problems of our time.

■ Katharina von NEIPPERG

Water – enter stage left

By definition water moves, runs, gushes with the sound of an almost musical trickling evoking a sensation of both pleasure and fulfillment. Always sought after in parks and gardens, since the dawn of history its presence has given rise to multiple interpretations from a simple source to the most picturesque of waterfalls. Certain periods such as the Renaissance came up with the most fantastic settings with spectacular effects.

On 12th February 2007 the Commission adopted the special «Criminal justice» programme for the 2007-2013 period, intended to promote judicial cooperation on criminal matters in the Union on the basis of mutual recognition and confidence. Against that background a tender was published by DG Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) at the beginning of May proposing to co-fund specific action according to the programme's general guidelines, in particular the strengthening of mutual understanding between national judicial systems. The UEHHA, in partnership with ELO, intends to propose a project on the subject of the theft, sale and illicit trafficking of cultural goods, in order to improve the fight against this type of crime through better prevention and better coordination between those concerned, from the private owner of works to the police services.

■ Alexandre
MARGHELIS

To escape from Rome's stifling heat during the summer months, the great families and high church dignitaries followed the trend for creating resorts of splendid villas surrounded by magnificent gardens. Water was usually siphoned off from natural springs and occupied centre stage by supplying fountains, cascades and water features. The waterfalls, grottos and pools provided an admirable structure for these gardens and hydraulic organs, birdsong created by the action of water or even mobile human and animal figures bedazzled as much as they entertained.

In 1560 one of the first major achievements was undoubtedly the gardens of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli which derived their unique character from the ubiquitous presence of water. However in order to achieve this cardinal Hippolytus II d'ESTE, advised by Pirro LIGORIO, did not hesitate to dig up an entire area of Tivoli to build a tunnel to divert the river and supply some 50 fountains. Here water is exploited by man in every possible form – pools, waterfalls, spouts and water curtains, fine rain, hydraulic machines, alleys of one hundred fountains all charm the visitor to saturation with the music and light of water as well as the mysteries of nature. Some years later water was also chosen as the main theme of the gardens of the Villa Lante in Bagnaia where it transformed a succession of terraces into a true spectacle. Near Florence, Villa Pratolino was described at the time as a true living

garden where water moved through an infinite variety of complex and astonishing water features.

Following such exploits, water could no longer be absent from major projects like this. Near Salzburg, the prince-archbishop Markus SITTIKUS von HOHENEMS had a summer residence built. At the foot of the Hellbrunner hill - a real water reservoir - the Italian Santino SOLARI built a series of water features as beautiful as they were entertaining. Salomon de CAUS for his part, probably the most famous creator of mechanical water features, also drew inspiration from Italian models when he worked at the Coudenberg in Brussels or in England. We should also mention Versailles and its impressive hydraulic organ imitating birdsong in Thetis' grotto, although it no longer exists, and the many methods used to supply it such as Marly's famous machine.

Today, these fantastic contraptions which bear witness to the ingenuity and creativity of man and the beauty of nature still provoke the admiration and surprise of visitors. But although certain examples have preserved their pomp and splendour often at the cost of impressive restorations with some compensation from the ensuing fame, others are alas now but a shadow of their former selves or have disappeared altogether.

■ Donatienne de SÉJOURNET

THE INSTITUTIONAL ECHO

Agreement of European Parliament and Council on the new directive on flooding

The directive proposed by the Commission in 2006 is intended to prevent and limit flooding and consequently reduce the harmful effects on human health, the environment, infrastructure and property. Under the new directive Member States must define the catchment areas and associated coastal zones at risk of flooding. They must draw up flood risk maps and management plans for the zones in question.



On 25th April 2007 the European Parliament adopted a series of compromise amendments agreed with the EU Council of Ministers on the proposal for a directive on the evaluation and management of flood risks («Floods» Directive).¹ The directive follows on from the Water Framework Directive adopted in 2000², which is the cornerstone of Community policy on water protection.

Since 1998, flooding in Europe has caused some 700 deaths, the displacement of around half a million people and generated an economic loss of at least 25 billion euros in insurance claims. Climate change will increase rainfall and raise sea levels, leading to an increase in flood risks in Europe over the coming decades. Without a strategy, and more specifically, without proper management of catchment areas, there will be serious consequences for the future absorption capacity of flood plains.

Objective: limit the risk of flooding and the resulting economic damage.

The directive will oblige the member states to adopt a three-stage long-term plan:

1. By 2011 the Member States will carry out a preliminary evaluation of flood risks in their catchment areas and coastal zones.
2. If there is a high probability of damage due to flooding, by 2013 the Member State will draw up flood zone maps and flood risk maps.
3. The flood risk management plans for these zones must be completed by 2015. These plans must describe measures intended to reduce the probability of flooding and to mitigate the potential consequences. They will cover all phases of the cycle of flood risk management, but must mainly focus on preventing flood damage (for example, by avoiding building housing and industrial plants in areas with a high present or future flood risk, or by adapting future infrastructure to flood risks), on protection (by taking measures intended to reduce the probability and/or consequences of flooding in specific zones, for example by re-establishing flood plains and wetlands) and on preparation

(for example, by giving instructions to the public on what to do in the event of a flood).

Particular attention is being paid to international river basins, with a call for Member States to coordinate their actions. All interested parties must be able to actively participate in the creation, implementation and updating of flood risk management plans. Moreover, the evaluations and risk maps, as well as management plans must be made public. These three stages must be repeated over a six year cycle, which will allow long-term developments to be taken into account.

For more information:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/flood_risk/index.htm.

■ Cécile BONINO



BNP PARIBAS
Private Bank

Coordination:
 François de RADIGUÈS
 tel: +352 021 190 345

¹ COM (2006) 15 final of 18.1.2006. Commission communication on the common position COM(2006) 775 of 6.12.2006.

² Directive 2000/60/EC

Biotechnology at the rescue of the water crisis?

Climate change is now a reality. Abnormal temperatures, floods, insufficient rainfalls, unusual droughts in unusual parts of the world have been being intensely observed recently. Water scarcity has been gaining ground dramatically, viciously encouraged by global warming¹. Extensive abstraction and poor management of water for farming increases the menace of over-exploitation of water resources. In Europe, this is particularly true in the Southern countries – it is not accidental that the incoming Portuguese presidency has made water scarcity a high environmental priority - and is becoming of serious concern even in less vulnerable regions (e.g. the UK 2003 drought). Droughts are becoming more frequent and lasting longer.

The agricultural sector has been repeatedly pointed to as a significant pressure upon water resources in terms of quantity and quality. But farmers themselves are increasingly at risk of losing their yields. The impact of drought events on farmers' income, food supply, and the economic and environmental aspects can prove particularly severe. Furthermore, in the light of the upcoming massive shift towards bioenergy production from crops, energy supply could equally be imperilled.

Attitudes towards water consumption and management must change. The European Union is currently in the process of rede-

signing policy to address the challenge of water scarcity. In this context, one of the keys to limiting risk is to increase resilience to droughts and to try to manage the potential effects of drought on crops.

The genetic revolution: the European controversy

As water shortages are now a global concern, the world's largest biotechnology companies have seized the immense market opportunity to currently invest billions in creating and marketing drought-resistant plants. Research is focused on genetically engineered higher yield varieties of corn, soybeans, cotton, canola, rice, cereals, oilseed rape and many more. Researchers at the University of Texas have genetically modified tomatoes so that they can be grown in areas where there is limited water. Whilst this does not mean that such plants could grow where there is no water, studies showed that in the case

of several days of drought conditions, the genetically modified tomatoes first show signs of damage, then rebound as soon as they receive water. According to scientists, the major cause for yield loss is the «stress» suffered by plants due to weather and climate. When the stressed gene is identified, it is then processed so as to be «switched off». Even though science has not advanced so far as to enable farming without water, these cutting-edge technologies could spare substantial amounts of fresh water and be a salvation for the most sensitive regions.

In Europe, political uncertainty driven by the unpopularity of GMOs withholds the substantial development of genetically modified crops as an answer to the various problems faced by agriculture. Science is not always properly taken into consideration in the political decision-making process. Hence, the conditions are not the most favourable for European companies to invest massively into research. However, the changing climatic conditions might well boost the market. No doubt that the potential benefits of biotech solutions will continue to feed into the debate.

■ Alexandre MARGHELIS



¹ Projections from the World Resources Institute show that 66 % of the world population could be affected by 2025.

THE ENLARGED EUROPE

Cross-border management of the Danube river basin : a major challenge...

The Danube is the second longest European river after the Volga (2,850km) and the longest in the EU. With a basin covering over 800 000 km², it crosses 10 countries¹ and consequently a multitude of climatic zones and different landscapes. This explains the great variety of flora and fauna along the river, in particular due to the protected areas created in the most sensitive zones.

The Danube river basin: a biodiversity reserve...

Over 300 bird species live on the banks of the Danube, which is one of the European migration routes: still untouched zones on its shores are wintering, rest and nesting areas for rare species such as the eagle owl, kingfisher, black stork etc, and the natural parks of the alluvial plains, in particular those in the Danube delta, are exceptional protected zones.

It is impossible to mention the Danube without mentioning its typical fish, certain of which are endemic. It is home to pike, perch, pike-perch, eel, salmon, sturgeon and the beluga or catfish etc. Unfortunately fish of the sturgeon species no longer get as far as Vienna due to the construction of the «Iron Gate» dam. But assisted by improved conservation measures and the «renaturalisation» of the banks, rare fish species have been re-acclimatised, in particular in Germany and Austria. These include the mud minnow (*Umbra krameri*), a relation of the pike, which was thought to have become extinct in 1975 and was rediscovered in 1992.

The riverbanks are also favourite habitats for many mammals, amphibians and reptiles including endemic species such as the Danube newt. Moreover, the river is not only an



important source of drinking water for 10 million people living along the water but is also important as an inland waterway and a source of hydroelectric power, as well as for wine production and tourism.

...But not inexhaustible....

However, the Danube is considered to be a highly endangered river not only because of human activity as a result of the dams and pollution but also due to climate change.

Like many other rivers its natural environment has come under repeated heavy attack since the beginning of the industrial era. Only 20% of the flood plains which there were in the 19th century still exist, and only half

of the river course can be considered to be «natural».

The situation is difficult as the countries concerned, some of which are the poorest in Europe, want to derive economic profit from their location along the river. An international, cross-border conservation policy is therefore necessary.

International Protection of the river basin

Water does not stop at administrative and political borders. The best way to protect and manage it is therefore intrinsically linked to efficient international cooperation within the geographical and hydrological area of the river basin. The management of the zones, including one or several regions covering the river basin and the various underground sources and coastal waters, is divided into districts. The Danube river basin district covers the river basin itself, the Romanian coastal catchment areas on the Black Sea, and the coastal waters along the Romanian and part of the Ukrainian coast.

The Convention on the Protection of the Danube

The Convention on the Protection of the Danube provides the legal framework for this interstate cooperation within the above-mentioned «district» intended to protect aquatic resources and their sustainable use. It was signed on 29 June 1994 in Sofia (Bulgaria).

¹ NB The river basin covers 18 countries, 10 of which belong to the EU, plus Montenegro which currently holds observer status.

THE ENLARGED EUROPE

The role of the International Commission for the protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is to implement the Convention, i.e. to enhance international cooperation, ensure sustainable management of the water and a more rational use of surface and underground waters, reduce levels of ecotoxic nutrients and substances, without forgetting pollution in particular in the Black Sea, and to control the hazards caused by flooding and the melting of ice. The 3rd plenary session of the ICPDR (27-28 November 2000 – Sofia) concluded that the implementation of the Water Framework Directive was priority number one.

Protection under the Water Framework Directive² :

All European waters have been managed according to the river basin approach since the Water Framework Directive was adopted by the European Union in 2000. It began a new era in water management due to the integrated approach it promotes.

In order for water in the Danube region's aquatic entities to be in a good state by 2015 and to ensure future generations have enough clean water, a committee of experts from industry, the rural environment, green NGOs and consumers as well as from national and local authorities was appointed by the ICDPR for the development of a management plan for the whole of the river basin complying with the principles of the Framework Directive.

This management plan must be revised every 6 years and contains an entire series of measures to ensure that the environmental goals

are reached within the deadlines. These measures include a general description of the characteristics of the river basin, a summary of the pressure and the impact from human activities on the state of surface and ground water, a map of surveillance networks, a list of environmental objectives, and a summary of public information and consultation measures.

For many years the Danube has been a victim of terrible floods, and in particular the last ones in 2006 caused serious damage in Hungary, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. This is why in 2004 all the countries of the river basin stepped up their cooperation and adopted an action programme to improve protection against floods. This initiative has led to the mapping of the high risk zones, and to providing rivers and tributaries more space by creating new water retention areas and by preventing new construction in the major natural flood plains.

This cooperation is impressive because it involves a large number of countries which have got together to protect their common heritage, since they have understood the crucial role it plays in environmental, socio-economic and cultural

terms. However, as noted during the European Water Conference organized by DG Environment on 22 and 23 March 2007 in Brussels, much progress still remains to be made in order to achieve the goals of the Framework Directive.

The management of the river basin must be a flexible and adaptable instrument intended to maintain and improve on the advantages of the natural aquatic environment. ELO is in favour of a balanced approach catering for the interests of all stakeholders – without forgetting business which depends on the good condition of the river – and the discovery of new tools. Sustainable management must rely on enhanced cooperation intended to reduce the conflict between the conservation of aquatic resources and the fight against climate change, which apart from causing water gluts and shortages, is a factor in the emergence of new plagues against which «sustainable» solutions will have to be found. ELO in particular encourages information campaigns since society must become aware of the exhaustible character of this natural resource which we are so used to having at the turn of a tap.

■ Cécile BONINO



2 Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 23 October 2000, establishing a framework for a Community water policy.



EUROFORENET

The Forest regions of Europe commit to developing local forest-energy supply chains

On 9th March the Council of Europe approved the European Commission's proposals on energy and climate change, intended to create a European energy policy by 2009. The challenge is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% before 2020 while increasing the share of renewable energy in Europe's consumption to 20%.

EUROFORENET, the «European Forest-Energy Network», launched by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Federation of Forestry Communes (FECOF) and co-funded by the European Commission – Directorate General for the Environment - is part of the 2020 challenge. The objective of this project is to develop local forest-energy supply chains drawing essentially on forestry resources sustainably managed by private and local authority owners. These therefore have a major role to play in achieving the 2020 energy objectives of the EU.

The 40,000 European local authority forests¹, covering areas varying from several dozen to several hundred hectares (European average: 525 hectares), represent local sources of wood intended for traditional and wood-energy markets. These forests represent a practical alternative and complementary source to fossil energy by producing renewable energy locally. Their additional contribution to the local economy is tangible, while they also protect biodiversity and maintain and/or create permanent local jobs in rural areas.

In 2005 FECOF identified a forest-energy priority in its framework programme, and this shows that local authorities are concerned and committed to reducing their energy

spending and dependence, in accordance with the EU's 2020 objectives. Forest regions are aware of the need to harness natural resources locally in order to meet society's growing demand for wood-energy. As they have first-hand knowledge of their territory and of management of their forestry resources they naturally take on a leadership role vis-à-vis other local stakeholders and citizens.

By acting across relatively large areas, consistent spatial and temporal management is easier for them than for most private forest owners in Europe (who only own 5 hectares on average). Controlling resources means easier control of wood supply chains, in particular that of forest woodchips.

Several options are open to the local authorities: the creation of stocks with local or even external traders, or direct resale in order to produce heat and/or electricity, or even any other use likely to generate profit. This already shows that one of the major constraints is the lack of local storage centres.

The various obstacles to this activity must be overcome because of the tangible advantages of this supply chain. This specific, consistent management allows profitable activities to develop in the countrysi-

de and the involvement of professional stakeholders and private forest owners. It opens direct access to available resources, optimizing those which are less so, exploiting wood and forests which were unused in the past, and finally reducing the fossil fuel bill. The main vocation of these supply chains is to feed the small, local heating networks, but they can also supply larger units in urban areas.

The optimization of quantities of wood by professionals must of course be based on management adapted to forest plots and species. For example, only the necessary amounts of wood should be exported and enough time should be allowed for organic matter such as needles, leaves or bark to return to the soil to avoid its long-term impoverishment. Likewise, the structure of the plots must be accommodated in order to restrict the impact of operating machinery, in particular in terms of soil compacting and damage to trees.

Both the harnessing of resources and involvement of professionals are necessary for the sustainable development of the regions involved and to allow the quantities of wood-energy on the market to grow. However, these must continue to act as a complement to more traditional uses of wood (building, homes, paper, packages, boards etc).

¹ Study commissioned by FECOF in 2005 for the Europe of 25



Within FECOF, certain countries such as France, Italy, Germany or the Czech republic have very clearly expressed the need to increase the availability of wood, which acts as a guarantee for the economic viability of businesses and which is the pre-condition for sustainable management.

The second advantage of forest regions is their ability to inform, communicate and involve all public and private stakeholders in wood-energy projects. FECOF has nonetheless highlighted the absolute necessity to set up local data banks capable of stipulating the real availability of forestry biomass in order to predict and understand their markets better. This information is currently missing in many European countries and local authorities should be in a position to support the collection of data on wood-energy.

It should also be highlighted that the supply chain encourages the creation of new businesses and the use of new technology. The chains developed in Europe often vary

considerably in order to respond to local circumstances. However, plans are needed to structure them on a regional and national scale, which allows the producers and traders to rationalize the supply of wood-energy. Supply is thus better adapted to demand, be it current or future.

FECOF recalls that the setting up of these new supply chains must be accompanied by economic, energy and social assessments. A comparison of the various energy chains should be done in such a way as to justify their viability. The support of DG Environment through the action of EUROFORENET is essential to launch this type of evaluation.

Efficient links with organizations already in existence in Europe and in the various countries must be forged to set up and improve the coordination of this network. The goal is also to exchange good practice on sustainable development and circulate information to local stakeholders and citizens.

The forest regions of Europe wish to highlight that :

- Wood-energy is a strategic, multi-sectoral issue for local authorities
- Local networks must be integrated into the overall national and European strategies (e.g. national forestry plans and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe)
- The development of indicators to evaluate the environmental, economic and social impact of the measures is underway
- A dialogue between the stakeholders (e.g. landowners, businesses, industry, research) is necessary both at the local and national levels in order to clarify and enhance the capacities of every stakeholder, group or institution
- Quality and simplicity of information is indispensable, and must be part of an ongoing process of improvement
- Guidelines for the sustainable management of forest-wood-energy supply chains are one of the most efficient decision-making tools and should be made available at all levels of intervention
- Cooperation between groups, sectors and institutions should be encouraged
- Communication and information materials are necessary for the stakeholders and users
- Continuous training of the various stakeholders is one of the preconditions for the healthy development of the forest-wood supply chain.

For further information :

www.euroforenet.eu

- Pier Carlo ZINGARI - FECOF
- Marie-Alice BUDNIOK - ELO
- Robin du PARC - ELO

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Property and Human Rights

Edited by Prof. Dr. H. VANDENBERGHE, published by die Keure la Chartre Bruylant, 2006 – ISBN (EAN) 2 - 8027 - 2356- 1

This work, following up the first International Colloquium on the notion of «property» in the light of the European Convention on the rights of man (August 2006), deepens the study of the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on the application of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention on the rights of man. It is of particular interest given the close following of the issue of rent blockage in Poland (the HUTTEN-CZAPSKA vs Poland case of 19th June 2006) by ELO's sister organisation GEFI – Groupement Européen des Fédérations intervenant dans l'Immobilier.

Both the ECHR and the Court of Justice of the European Communities (ECJ) have repeatedly emphasised

that the right to property is not an absolute right, and that limitations to the right can be justified under certain conditions. Indeed Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 refers to limits that can be put on the right to property.

However, in the event of a limitation to the right to property, there should be proportionality between the measure adopted and the aim pursued in the general interest, such that the measures do not constitute a disproportionate and intolerable interference with the rights of the owner, impinging upon the very substance of the right to property.

In the HUTTEN-CZAPSKA vs Poland case the conclusion came back to the theme of the balance which must be achieved between res-

pecting property rights and pursuing a goal of general interest: Poland was required to, on the one hand protect the rights of property-owners, but on the other hand respect the social rights of tenants – a socially sensitive question, given that the situation applied to 100 000 property-owners and nearly one million tenants.

The work brings under its survey the right of the respect of property with regard to measures amounting to an expropriation of the property, with regard to measures merely restricting or controlling the use of property, the application of the article in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as a historical review of the drafting of the property clause in the European Convention on the rights of man.

Diary Dates 2007

3-15 June, Brussels, Park Cinquantenaire

Exhibition in a 1,600m² tent during Green Week 2007, in particular to present companies, as part of the Environment Festival.

7 June, Brussels, Bibliothèque Solvay

«Water Security: Does Europe have a Strategy?» - debate organized by «Friends of Europe» and the European Water Partnership, with the participation of Stavros DIMAS, the Environment Commissioner.

8-10 June, Hex (Belgium)

Festival of plants, roses and the kitchen garden; with exhibitions, conferences, visits and demonstrations. www.hex.be

12-15 June, Brussels, Charlemagne building

«Past lessons, Future challenges» is the main subject of Green Week 2007, with debates, exhibitions, examples of good practice, and exchange of information between local, regional, national, European administrations and non-governmental organizations.

19-21 June, Moscow

AgroFarm International Exhibition for Animal Husbandry and Breeding, at the All-Russian Exhibition Centre.

<http://www.agriworld.ru/>

26-27 June, Brussels

«Towards future challenges of agricultural research in Europe», organised by the European

Commission DG Research, to face up to globalisation, climate change and the overexploitation of natural resources. This will build on the results of the foresight process initiated by the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR). http://ec.europa.eu/research/headlines/archives_diary_en.cfm

28-29 June, La Baule (FR)

World Investment Conference «Making Europe more Attractive and Competitive», bringing together high-level economic leaders, with innovation in the area of environmental technology at the heart of the challenges and debates.

<http://www.labaulewic.org/>



**Syngenta
International AG
Brussels Office**

**Avenue Louise, 240
B - 1050 Brussels**

**Tel : +32.2.642 2727
Fax : +32.2.642 2720**