



RESEAU INTERNATIONAL DES ORGANISMES DE BASSIN  
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANISATIONS  
RED INTERNACIONAL DE ORGANISMOS DE CUENCA

« EUROPE-INBO 2006 »

4th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE  
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE



MEGEVE (FRANCE)  
20, 21 et 22 SEPTEMBER 2006

## FINAL RESOLUTIONS

V4

On the occasion of the 2nd International Congress on water in mountains, more than **500 participants**, including 250 elected representatives, scientists and technicians of the water sector, and **more than 165 representatives** of governmental administrations in charge of water resources management, of basin organizations or district authorities **coming from 33 countries**: Austria, Belgium, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Moldavia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and International Commissions (Scheldt, Leman, Maas, Danube), as well as representatives from Brazil, Canada, Congo, the Congo Democratic Republic, Morocco, South Africa, USA, Uzbekistan, of the International Commission for the Congo, Ubangui and Sangha River Basins (CICOS), of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), the United Nations Environment Program, of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the European Investment Bank and European Commission, **met in Megève in France, from 20 to 22 September 2006, at the invitation of the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development and the French Water Agencies**, under the auspices of the **Group of European Basin Organizations (EUROPE-INBO) for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD)**, of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO) and of the Central and Eastern European Network of Basin Organizations (CEENBO).

INBO World Liaison Bureau held a statutory meeting on the occasion of this conference.

The «**EUROPE-INBO 2006**» Conference, itself, was organized simultaneously with an international scientific and technical congress on « **Water in mountains: for integrated management in upper basins** », as well as a meeting of elected officials of the European mountainous areas, which were also held in Megève at the same dates. The Megève congress gathered more than 500 participants.

The congress was honored by the presence of Mrs. Nelly OLIN, French Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development, who came to open the conference and present the new French draft Law on water and aquatic environments, whose examination by the Parliament is ending.

The participants particularly regretted the noticed absence of the Directorate-General of Environment of the European Commission in Brussels, which could have taken advantage of this occasion to meet many field stakeholders involved in WFD implementation and coming from all Europe.

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) has now entered into an active and effective phase of its implementation and the INBO objective is to allow the Basin Organizations and District Authorities to meet regularly, in an informal way, to exchange their practical experience, to identify the very operational problems which they encounter in the field and to make any useful proposal.

This work is, obviously, in the continuity of the recommendations and decisions of the Committee of the Water Directors of the European Union and of the Strategic Coordination Group led by the Commission, in which INBO is an active partner who can thus transmit information coming from its Member Organizations, as well as the conclusions of this European conference of Megève.

The Megève conference was organized around four main and current topics for the implementation of the Framework Directive in river basin districts:

- Compatibility between WFD and infrastructures (hydropower, protection against erosion and floods, inland waterways, etc.), Heavily Modified Water Bodies, Artificial Water Bodies,
  - The taking into account of quantitative problems (droughts, water sharing, water transfers and reservoirs, specificity of the Mediterranean climate, etc.),
  - Monitoring, monitoring networks and reporting, comparisons between Water Bodies and countries, inter-calibration,
  - Preparation of Programs of Measures, economic studies and financing.

A special session dealt with the outcomes of the first public enquiry, which has just been completed.

As the conference was taking place in the Alps, special attention was paid to the characteristics of hydrological and ecological regions and Water Bodies in European mountains, basin heads, and to the specific measures, that should be considered for them to achieve good ecological status in 2015.

The meeting also allowed to draw results from the great success obtained by the official session on the Framework Directive, organized by INBO during the **4th Water Forum of MEXICO CITY**, last March, and in which 7 European Water Directors intervened in front of more than 250 participants.

The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) is currently present in 58 Countries. It was created in 1994 in Aix-les-Bains (France) to enable the mobilization of the real and practical experience of decision-makers and professionals of the administrations and organizations concerned, directly responsible for the effective implementation of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) at the level of river basins or wishing to implement it in their respective countries or regions. INBO is open to all relevant organizations that wish to become members. All are all welcomed.

In Europe, INBO relies on Regional Networks in Central and Eastern Europe (CEENBO) and in the Mediterranean (MENBO), on the Network of International Commissions and Transboundary Basins Organizations and on the « **EUROPE-INBO** » **Group of European Basin Organizations** for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), created in November 2003 during the Valencia meeting in Spain.

The second and third plenary assemblies of the « EUROPE-INBO » Group were respectively held in September of 2004 in Krakow in Poland and of 2005 in Namur in the Walloon Region (Belgium).

The « EUROPE-INBO » Group meets a need for informal exchanges of practical experiences between voluntary basin organizations, which encounter many operational problems in the field implementation of the WFD and develop original approaches.

The work of the « EUROPE-INBO » group aims at enriching the common implementation strategy (CIS) for the Water Framework Directive (WFD) without duplicating work already done and by also presenting different approaches, operational results or field experiments and by identifying the very practical and pragmatic questions, which are asked by the European relevant Basin Organizations and Authorities for the effective and more efficient implementation of the Framework Directive in their respective basins and districts.

#### **51 papers were presented during the Megève meeting.**

**□ During their discussions, the delegates proposed several recommendations to improve WFD implementation at the level of the European basins:**

**1- Compatibility between WFD and infrastructures (hydropower, protection against erosion and floods, inland waterways, etc.), Heavily Modified Water Bodies, Artificial Water Bodies,**

- With regard to developments, **the WFD plans for a series of provisions so that developments and good ecological status are reconcilable** (see possibilities of time delays, of less strict objectives, designation of Heavily Modified Water Bodies, etc.).
- At the political level, we know that antagonisms can exist but also there are possible synergies between WFD and infrastructures for navigation, hydro-power or flood prevention. **There are possible solutions** at the technical level. It is necessary to increase the sharing of successful experience to convince of this possible compatibility.
- The participants underlined the significance of making sure, in a pragmatic way, that there is good adequacy between the real stakes and preliminary **economic analyses** aiming to designate the Heavily Modified Water Bodies. Indeed, **many obvious cases will not require very detailed or heavy economic studies**, for example during the analysis of a major use under questioning (big size infrastructure related to the protection of the human lives against floods, navigation, etc.).
- However, if the WFD can reconcile some developments and uses, it also requires practical actions **to guarantee the best possible ecological quality** of these modified or developed environments (e.g.: objective ecological flows to be determined for hydro-power, good chemical and physicochemical status to be achieved for the HMWBs).
- In the case of Artificial and Heavily Modified Water Bodies, technical and economic expertise will be associated from the start of the process.
- Another point underlined during the exchanges is **the significance of the local users and stakeholders' involvement** in the work related to these subject matters, which will be the key to guarantee an effective but realistic implementation of the Directive in these areas. For such a purpose, **the implication of the basin organizations** in the preparation and organization of this dialogue takes all its significance, and may go beyond the mere organization of official main events of public consultation planned for in the Directive.
- It is recommended to anticipate the effects of the classification of Water Bodies and of the designation of protected areas on future and necessary developments to be made,
- It is also necessary to limit the creation of surface water bodies, to mitigate the lack of river maintenance, to limit the modifications of the aquatic environments by developments on the banks, open channels building, river sills, locks, the trampling of cattle,

### **With regard to hydropower:**

- The hydropower infrastructures change the ecosystems but produce renewable energy. On the one hand, the Water Framework Directive strengthens the protection of aquatic ecosystems, even their restoration, on the other, the « Renewable Energy » Directive aims at increasing the energy produced without greenhouse effect, including hydropower... (dams, micro power stations, etc.), how can we apply these two directives at the same time?,
- The modernization and optimization of the existing hydropower installations are a priority.

### **With regard to floods:**

- It is first necessary to make the « upstream-downstream » common cause a main item of consistent management on the scale of basins and sub-basins,
- In the transboundary basins in particular, cooperation between riparian States for jointly looking for coordinated solutions and for sharing responsibilities should be promoted,
- Protection against floods must pass through a coordinated approach, combining the protection of people and properties, the reduction of vulnerabilities, the restoration of the open flows of rivers, the conservation and the re-building of the natural flood storage areas, the forecasting of events, the identification of zones at risk, the publication of « atlases » of easily flooded zones, the control of urbanization, warning and education.
- For facilitating the directive implementation in the Member States, the European Circles of exchanges are useful platforms (in particular the European Circle of Exchange on Flood Mapping EXCIMAP).

### **2- The taking into account of the quantitative problems (droughts, water sharing, water transfers and tanks, specificities of the Mediterranean climate, etc.):**

- The availability of fresh water, in sufficient quantity and quality, may become, in a generation from now, one of the main limiting factors of the economic and social development in many European countries and not only in the Mediterranean area.
- Climate change is likely to increase the frequency of extreme events, such as floods and droughts.
- It is necessary to increase the thinking about and prospective on the consequences of the climate change. A common approach is necessary to comply with the obligations of the WFD in critical situations.

- The prevention of recurring droughts can no more be done on a case-by-case basis but must be planned in the long term, by solving the structural problems which occur in order to prevent, in the best possible way, their effects and to avoid the total degradation of water resources.
- Mobilizing new resources should only be planned for when they are ecologically acceptable and economically reasonable.
- Plans for the Management of Water Scarcity should prioritize drinking water supply as compared to the other uses, making sure that water is equitably and soundly shared between the various uses, ensuring a better optimization of water and avoiding wastages.
- They must ensure a **better optimization** of existing water and resources before planning the launching of projects for the mobilization of new resources.
- Water saving, leak detection, recycling, the reuse of treated water, groundwater recharge, the desalination of sea water, research on low-consumption uses must become priorities.
- It is essential to very quickly strengthen, on a worldwide scale, the actions necessary to ensure a true integrated water resources management: The river basins are the natural territories where water flows on the soil or in the subsoil. It is at such a level that water management should be organized and the mountains, in the upper parts of the basins, are « the water towers of the planet » ,

The participants support the main conclusions of the European working group on water scarcity and droughts, especially the following points:

- *Although the WFD is not directly designed to tackle quantitative issues, its purposes include contributing to the mitigation of drought effects (art. 1.e) and the promotion of sustainable water use (art 1.b) and its environmental objectives include ensuring a balance between abstraction and recharge of groundwater (art 4.1(b)(ii). Furthermore, water quantity can have a strong impact on water quality and therefore on good ecological and chemical status.*
- *In this respect, the Directive can be an instrument for addressing drought and water scarcity management :*
  - *Actions which will help to achieve WFD objectives through to managing water quantity (e.g. water scarcity) should be considered as "measures" (basic/supplementary) when developing WFD POM and associated RBMPs(art.11,art.13),*
  - *When and where needed, a specific "drought management sub-plan" could be used to supplement the WFD RBMP (art. 13.5). Many EU countries already generate drought plans as part of their 'security of supply' procedures,*

- *Public participation, as required by WFD (art. 14), should also be organized around water scarcity management issues and should be coordinated with other initiatives taken to implement art. 14,*
- *When developing the WFD POM and associated RBMPs (art. 11 and 13), the interaction between quantitative and qualitative water management aspects should be considered through an integrated approach when developing plans and programs in order to make coherency and create synergies where possible. The interaction between quantitative and qualitative water management aspects may lead to specific and supplementary constraints (technical and financial) for concerned countries. When setting the environmental objectives in the RBMPs, these additional constraints should be taken into account when justifying the potential exemptions,*
- *Regarding exemptions, "prolonged droughts" are introduced in the Directive (Art, 4.6) as natural cause or force majeure events resulting in temporary deterioration in the status of water bodies. Therefore, in the context of the obligations of the WFD, clear definitions of what is understood by "prolonged droughts" will have to be established.*

**A drought management plan should include:**

- ❖ **Indicators for water resource assessment (qualitative and quantitative):**
  - In Spain, special action plans envisage a qualitative and quantitative follow-up (piezometric),
  - The selected indicators must allow a warning, sufficiently in advance, to the decision-makers on the resource problems to come,
- ❖ **A joint and overall management of surface waters and groundwater:**
  - The installation of droughts wells allowing a transfer of the groundwater resource to surface waters whenever necessary is an initiative to take.
- ❖ **A search for all the available resources:**
  - Reuse of water from wastewater treatment plants,
  - Search for alternatives for drinking water, etc.
- ❖ **The establishment of rules for water saving:**
  - Reduction of irrigation (in Spain up to 60%),
  - Prohibition of washing cars, of watering gardens, shutting down of all water fountains, etc
- ❖ **The mobilization of enlarged multidisciplinary teams:**
  - Working with local scientists, politicians, decision makers, stakeholders.

**The objectives must, at the same time, be economic, social and environmental:**

- Public participation should thus be extended to the drought-related stakes,
- Qualitative and quantitative indicators, understood by everyone, should be developed.

**The actions can only succeed if they are consensual and understood by the public and the various stakeholders.**

**International cooperation should be promoted:**

- The European Commission has created a working group on drought (within CIS) with Italy, France and Spain, etc.

It is necessary to develop new methods for assessing water effectiveness, the impact of projects on water availability, for decision-making and planning supporting aid.

**Drought management at the level of basins and Water Bodies should take possible water transfers into account, whenever they exist:**

- A systemic approach can be sometimes relevant in the Mediterranean region taking into account the current and historic sharing of resources via reservoirs, networks of channels, etc.
- management can then be done at the level of aggregated sub-basins, taking into account the water transfer systems.

**The transboundary sharing of water resource should be consensual and pragmatic:**

- water resource sharing originates many conflicts over the world,
- INWEC (International Network of Water Environmental Centers) studies the criteria of water sharing and provides a multicriteria decision-making supporting tool (example of the Balkans),
- win/win solutions may lead to sustainable development but they are still rare,
- cooperation between riparian countries, in which confidence is the key element of dialogue, allows for necessary discussions and the finding of pragmatic solutions on a case-by-case basis.

It is also necessary to:

- Examine the water savings which can be carried out, by applying this approach to all the stakeholders, while « prioritizing the largest water consumers in period of drought ». For private individuals, these water savings will require, for example, the obligatory installation of water meters in each lodging in apartment buildings. As concerns agriculture, the plan for scarcity management should recommend a collective management of water resources by groups of irrigators, accompanied by adapted environmental practices. These measures should be accompanied by the establishment of water pricing systems ensuring maximum cost recovery.
- Disseminate the results of research programs dealing with the adaptation of the crops to the climate (genetic selection, farming practices, etc.) or the reduction of water consumption in the biggest water consuming industrial processes, the power stations for electricity production in particular.
- Optimize the reuse of rainwater and wastewater, still under-utilized. Basin organizations can also play an inciting role in this direction, even if regulatory or normative measures would seem to be paramount.



- Develop technical and management tools aiming at anticipating the management of low water levels; better knowledge of the relations between groundwater and surface water, or coordination of the means for piezometric monitoring and integration of data bases.

Wetlands have an essential role in the water supply to rivers and aquifers. Action plans have been established for a few years, but threats remain. The restoration of the functionalities of aquatic environments, the protection and rehabilitation of wetlands are necessary to achieve good ecological status.

The Mediterranean basin is likely to be one of the areas of the world most affected by climate change. The vulnerability of the ecosystems may increase with the decrease in soil fertility and the reduction of the availability of water resources, which will favor the occurrence of severe droughts, as well as of more frequent and more intense forest fires: it is essential to prepare for them and anticipate them.

### **3- Monitoring, monitoring networks and reporting, comparisons between Water Bodies and countries, inter-calibration,**

- It is a major concern for the basin organizations, due to the close deadline given by the WFD,
- There is a methodological step to make to pass from the control of physico-chemistry to that of biology, planned for in the WFD,
- It is still difficult to define the control networks because of the lack of benchmarks with the definition of what should precisely be the « good ecological status »,
- Significant financial efforts are to be made to ensure the creation and operation of these control networks,

The participants also underlined the following points :

- ♦ The need to follow-up small water bodies, especially in upstream areas. These areas are important from the point of view of water and biodiversity; their safeguarding can contribute to the good status of the downstream water bodies.
- ♦ The significance of **the gradual implementation of operational and additional controls**, as soon as the definition of the Programs of Measures before the starting of their implementation.
- ♦ The detailed information, which will have to be provided to meet the next reporting obligations, will be certainly smaller in operational networks than in monitoring networks. It is still difficult to provide site localization for example, however, the number of control points planned for as well as the frequencies, even the potential parameters to be monitored, is currently being defined in many river basin districts.

- ♦ The lack of biological indexes on some quality elements is difficult to remedy in a short time (significant need for reference data, link with possible common European methodologies to come, delay in the inter-calibration process).
- ♦ From a technical point of view, **the daughter directive on dangerous substances** is necessary for the definition of the controls which will have to be carried out to allow the evaluation of chemical status.
- ♦ It is advisable to make sure that there is consistency between the monitoring of the substances controlled in raw water, for implementing the Directive on « drinking water », prioritizing water supply from surface water and the substances targeted by the Framework Directive.
- ♦ It is also necessary to better consider a continuum between surface water and groundwater, especially regarding non-point pollution and contaminated soils and sites. Research efforts are needed in this field.
- ♦ It is also essential to make the monitoring and follow-up systems coherent, to harmonize the data and the Geographic Information Systems, in the transboundary basins as a priority,

#### **General recommendations:**

- ♦ The migrating fish species are very relevant indicators of river quality; it is of prime importance for our regions to restore the circulation of fish species.

#### **It is necessary to:**

- ♦ Act towards the persons in charge in the Member States so that they take measures for monitoring the invading aquatic species, assessing the threats which they represent, informing of the risks of propagation between basins, providing the resources necessary to prevent the introduction and proliferation of the these species in shared transboundary waters,
- ♦ Develop international and standardized methods for the early tracking of the invading aquatic species and standardized processes for fighting against these species.

#### **4- Preparation of Programs of Measures and Action Plans, economic studies and financing:**

As regards the international basins, the participants reaffirmed the recommendations given during the « EUROPE-INBO 2005 » meeting of Namur and in particular:

- ◆ To promote a bottom-up approach, using the work done by various countries to prepare the Program of Measures and to formulate the management plan of an associated International District,
- ◆ To develop exchanges on the methods used and tools, such as catalogues of measures, databases on environmental costs, etc. Transparency is essential for a good common understanding of the methods used and a comparability of the obtained results, in particular regarding the risk of not achieving good status and cost recovery,-
- ◆ To conceive an iterative and dynamic approach for the formulation of the Program of Measures, taking future actions into account without delaying the actions to be taken in the short term.

And more generally:

- To strengthen the action of the existing international bodies (international commissions, bilateral cooperation, etc.) which have already allowed profitable exchanges for the drawing up of the roof reports in the International Districts, and to promote a clear definition of the roles and commitments of each country,
- To support the creation of new International Commissions and to strengthen cooperation for shared basins with the countries neighboring the EU (candidate countries, NIS and Balkan countries), through projects, supported by the European Commission, for the implementation of the WFD principles in these basins. These cooperation programs could have the form of twinning arrangements between countries or basins, for instance,
- It is also necessary to strengthen cooperation programs for basin management within the neighborhood policy in the Mediterranean and in the Caucasus.

With regard to the **formulation of Programs of Measures** at the level of each country:

- It is important to find a suited scale for work, sometimes local, to arrive at the development of sufficiently technically detailed measures to meet, once gathered, the great stakes identified in the River Basin Districts. Plans for sub-basins and local programs of measures (river contracts, etc.) should then be considered, in consistency with the main orientations of the District Plan..
- The search for a **combination between regulatory measures, financial provisions and contractual measures** when drafting a Program of Measures will require an **important coordination** between the various State services responsible for water management, the basin organizations and local authorities, etc.

- The above-mentioned points plead for an effective organization of dialogue and decision-making by **involving the maximum of local stakeholders**, by mobilizing the participative bodies, either already existing or to be created.
- In a limited number of cases, uncertainties could remain on the ecological status objective for water to be achieved on the long term because of the insufficiency of data or technical difficulties. Increasing knowledge and resorting to extended dialogue for the sector concerned could then constitute particular measures.
- Efforts should be oriented towards the networks and wastewater treatment plants of small communities, towards the on-site sanitation sector, the livestock breeding farms, which constitute a considerable source of inputs; especially in sectors where small rivers have very low self-purification capacities, and for certain small eutrophicated reservoirs.
- A better coordination between water policy and the Common Agricultural Policy is essential. It is necessary to better identify the areas in which agricultural pressures have a significant impact on water quality and to prioritize the means necessary for restoring quality: mobilizing joint financing for these priority zones, considering financial compensations for the farmers, who change their behavior in a lasting way, etc.
- It is necessary to establish indicators for reporting on the actions carried out and on their efficiency.
- It is necessary to take into account the protected areas, where stricter environmental objectives can apply.
- There is a real synergy between water-related tourist development and the WFD objectives. The safeguarding of water resource quality for recreation purposes represents a strong stake in economic term.
- The European funds for regional cohesion will have to support the efforts of the new Member States or candidates for integration into the European Union for allowing some of them to achieve the WFD objectives.

**5- Special session: public consultation for the implementation of the Framework Directive, training needs, increasing of research efforts:**

- For promoting consultation it is necessary:
  - to raise the awareness and inform the general public, to explain the stakes, so that the people can give their opinion,
  - to identify more precisely the issues of interest for the general public in each local context: drinking water, water price, neighborhood issues, etc.,

- to prepare strong arguments for raising the awareness and motivating the public, with a simple and adapted vocabulary, evidencing the positive results of achieving the good ecological status,
- to make more room for references and cultural practices in water policy in order to interest the populations and develop a real citizen management of water.

An « administrative » consultation should not be taken for a « popular » consultation of the general public which calls upon cultural bases, images, signs of recognition and very specific media.

It seems that original approaches, based on the local organization of events or on the use of local communication supports, are sometimes more effective for mobilizing the citizens than the use of the media for a wide dissemination to the general public, the cost of which is high for a return which is sometimes disappointing. It is necessary to take into account proximity and direct contact on the places of living. The passage by the relay of local authorities and of NGOs may be very useful but attention should be paid not to make them lose their contestation identity.

Generally, it appears that the consultation and the involvement of the general public in the implementation of water policies will require the use of specialists in communication and public enquiries in order to tend to maximum effectiveness and better participative interactivity, to define the most suitable methods, most of which still remaining to be tested. These **methods**, in addition to being effective, will have to be **long-term ones** and anticipate the improvement of future consultations.

In particular, it is necessary to adopt a language adapted to the targeted publics while avoiding too technical or bureaucratic terms which would be inaccessible to the greatest number of citizens. The language should be clear, simple, understandable by everyone with strong and recognizable visual documents.

These consultations will have a cost and it is necessary to plan for significant budgets to comply with the new obligations of the WFD in this field.

The delegates then proposed:

- To promote and support the development of « Youth Parliaments for water », on the scale of river basins, in order to reconcile education on water and citizen's education,
- To promote exchanges between European basins on this topic, in order to allow the sharing of experiences on consultation methods and means and on the processing of the received opinions,
- To create a working group in order to produce and disseminate to the « EUROPE-INBO » members a « practical guide for consultation » including:
  - a list of the types of communication tools and of partnerships accompanied by an evaluation of the advantages and limits of each one,
  - the sharing of experiences on the methods used for the processing, analysis and synthesis of the received opinions,

- a list of useful « recipes » and errors to be avoided (e.g. the choice of dates, processes, strategy, etc.).

The main meeting of 2007 should not be missed!

- To meet the **information needs**, it is necessary to capitalize and promote Trans-European exchanges of experience between the River Basin Districts, by using the new information technologies.
- **To increase efforts on research, it is necessary:**
  - ◆ To develop collaboration between universities and research institutes.
  - ◆ To promote the sharing of experiences on examples of efficient agro-environmental measures (establishment of buffer zones, reasoning on inputs, conversion of irrigated crops into less water-consuming crops, etc.) while targeting on cases where farmers' associations have initiated and carried out actions.
  - ◆ To increase prior dialogue between researchers and Basin Organizations for them to participate in the need assessment, then afterwards for applying the obtained results. It is necessary to combine the financial resources given to research with the means given to promote actions of demonstration, an intermediate stage between research itself and implementation without any risk of failure in the field. It is also necessary to promote and develop local initiatives of partnership between the research world and the field experts (workshop areas for example). These workshop areas could be subsidized after an evaluation of the action effects.

□ **The participants also reaffirmed their wish for continuing the exchange of their experience, through:**

- The organization of regular meetings, yearly plenary sessions or thematic workshops. Apart from an exchange of experiences, these meetings allow to effectively identify the main concerns of basin organizations involved in the practical implementation of the WFD.

**Usually, access to information on the WFD implementation in the different countries of the European Union and even more in each District, still remains complex and difficult for basin organizations.**

It would be interesting to have case studies easily available as well as the documents produced by the European basin organizations and District Authorities, such as the « initial characterizations » carried out before the end of 2004 (abstract in English, links with the sites of basin organizations), and the other documents planned for in the timetable for WFD implementation.

A forum for discussions and frequently asked questions should also be very useful.

- The development of twinning agreements between basin organizations of different countries facing common problems, especially within the **TWINBASIN project**.
- The promotion of training and professional capacity building programs for the executives and staffs of Basins Organizations, especially with the start of the WFD-LEARN program, whose prototype of joint distance teaching and sharing of experience has already encouraging results.
- The “IWRM-NET” project, financed by the Research DG of the European Commission also raised much interest, as it should allow a better link between the basin organizations and the research institutions, thus facilitating the taking into account of the field stakeholders’ concerns and the dissemination of knowledge for the implementation of the directive.

#### ◆ **OTHER CONCLUSIONS**

The Megève assembly was made aware of the specificities of islands which imply a particular approach and the establishment of specific reference frames, still widely inexistent, regarding water management and WFD implementation.

Generally, the participants considered very favorably the exchanges, which allowed a better understanding of the WFD and of its instruments on the one hand, and, on the other, the significant progress already made in the first stage of its implementation.

**The delegates thanked the Ministry and the French Water Agencies for having initiated this 4<sup>th</sup> European conference « EUROPE-INBO », and for their perfect organization and their very warm welcome in Megève.**

**Mr. Jacky COTTET, President of the French Rhone – Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency**, will chair the « EUROPE-INBO » group until its next plenary assembly in 2007.

The delegates cordially congratulated **Mr. Jean Marie WAUTHIER**, Director in charge of international relations in the environment sector at the Ministry of the Walloon Region, for the effectiveness with which he held the Presidency of the « EUROPE-INBO » Group in 2005/2006 and for the significant progress made in the structuring and the extension of the partnership through the whole European Union and neighboring Countries, and especially for the exceptional success of the session on the Framework Directive, organized by « EUROPE-INBO » during the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico City on last 18 March.

**The delegates retained with thanks the proposal from the Italian basin organizations to organize the next plenary meeting of « EUROPE-INBO » in Autumn 2007 in Italy.**

All the working documents of the meeting, as well as the papers and photographs of the working sessions, are available on the website : [www.inbo-news.org](http://www.inbo-news.org).

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED IN MEGEVE ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2006.**