

**Study on national river restoration
policies in Europe :
a few thoughts from a French
perspective**

Thoughts on the study, from a French perspective

Very comprehensive and interesting study:

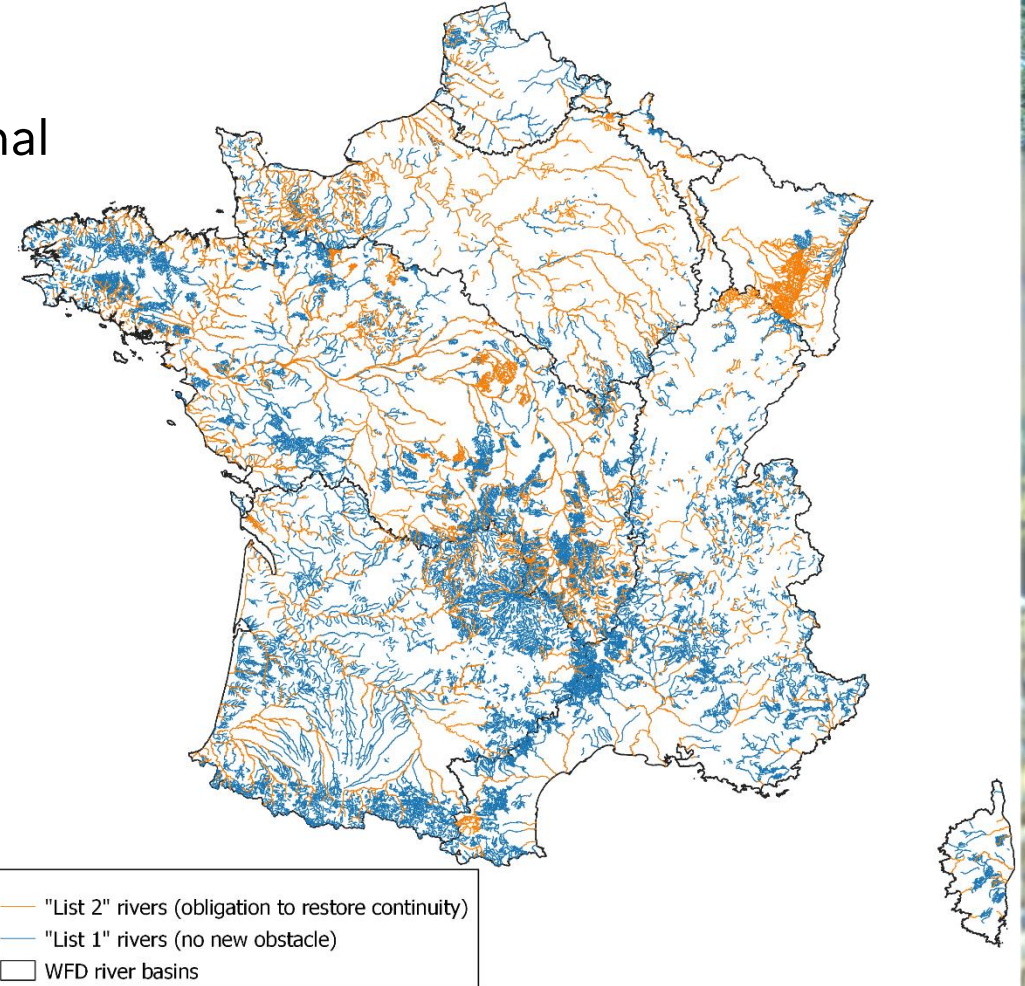
- Addresses a real need : get to know other types of policies, get inspiration and share good practice
- Would be interesting to extend it to all 27 Member States

Thoughts on the study, from a French perspective

Context : river continuity restoration in France

- Since 2012-2013, **legal obligation** to restore longitudinal continuity on some rivers with high environmental stakes (~11% of French rivers)

Map of the rivers with an obligation to preserve (« list 1 ») or restore (« list 2 ») river continuity. Data from the SANDRE database



Thoughts on the study, from a French perspective

Context : river continuity restoration in France

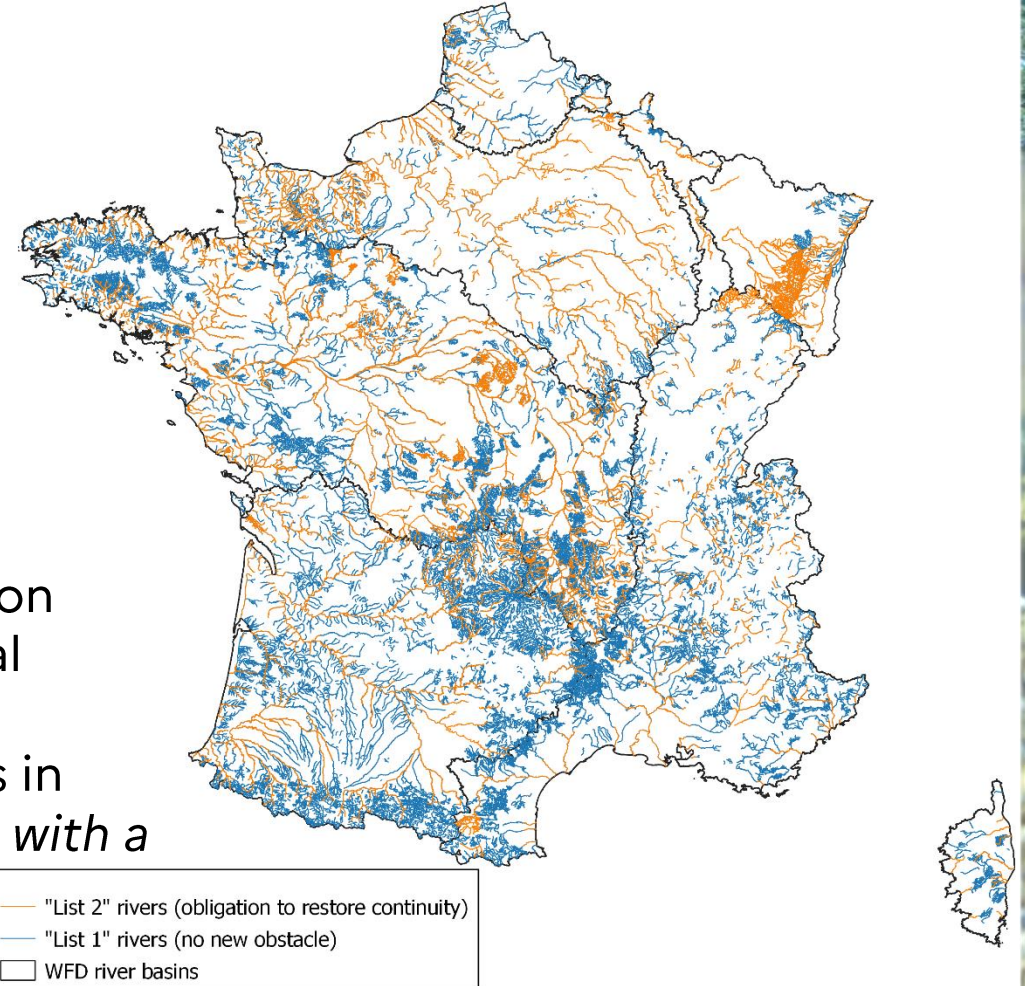
- **10 years later : many positive results**
 - ✓ Comprehensive inventory of barriers to longitudinal continuity (ROE)
 - ✓ ~5 500 barriers treated in 2021
 - ✓ Also many projects on river without legal obligation → positive ripple effect!

- **... But some less positive results**

- ✗ Controversial policy : many opponents, disinformation campaign about « adverse impacts » of barrier removal

- ✗ The law changed in 2021: difficult to remove barriers in order to restore the longitudinal connectivity *on rivers with a legal obligation...*

Map of the rivers with an obligation to preserve (« list 1 ») or restore (« list 2 ») river continuity. Data from the SANDRE database



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Context : river continuity restoration in France

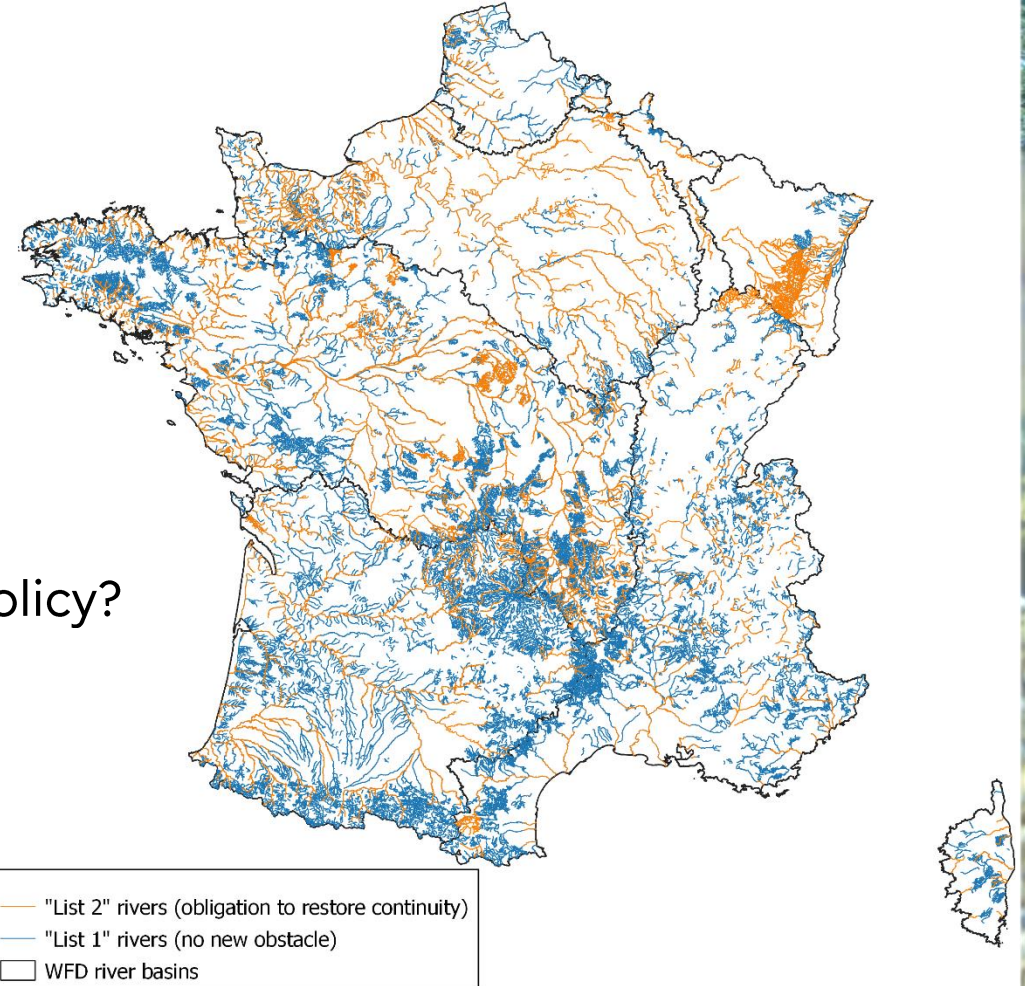
→ We had *many* questions that were answered by the study, for example:

How did other Member States implement their river continuity policy?

Are their results different?

Do they have similar issues with acceptability of the policy?

Map of the rivers with an obligation to preserve (« list 1 ») or restore (« list 2 ») river continuity. Data from the SANDRE database



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→ Some of the facts we learned from the study

- Most Member States implement their river continuity policy through their RBMP/programme of measures
- Many river continuity restoration policies were *initially* designed to protect migratory fishes
- Fish passes seem to be implemented more often than barrier removal? But there seems to be a shift in the last few years
- Some other Member States also have long-term/permanent water permits that can complicate the implementation of mitigation measures or restoration.
- Some other Member States suffer from a lack of public support for river restoration projects as well: **a european-wide need for more communication of the importance and the benefits of restoring the natural functions of rivers?**