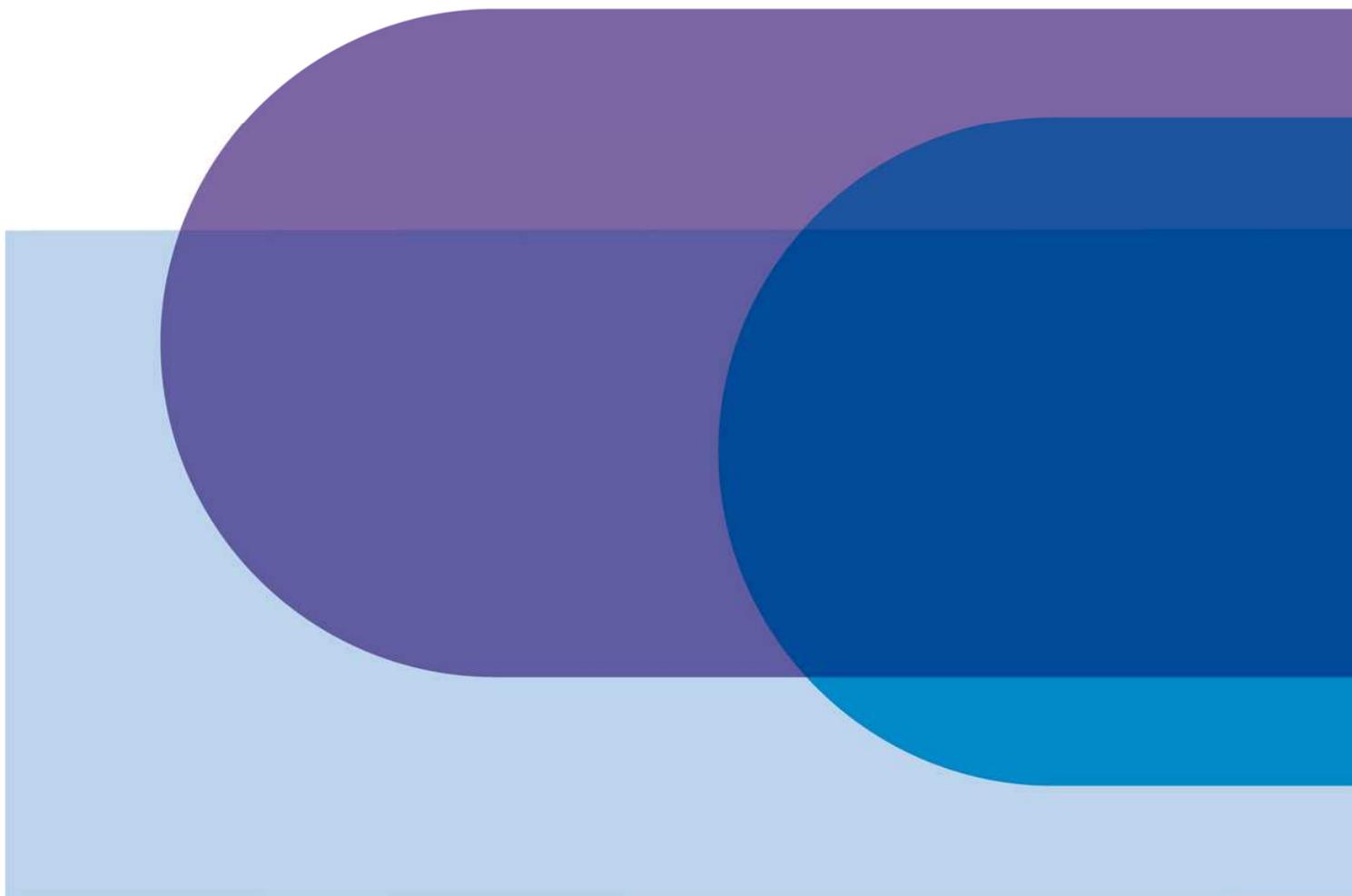


REPORT



FLOOD-WISE final conference

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European Union
European Regional Development Fund



INTERREG IVC
INNOVATION & ENVIRONMENT
REGIONS OF EUROPE SHARING SOLUTIONS

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The conference programme

From 23 to 24 October the final conference of FLOOD-WISE was organized in Maastricht. During the conference the project results were presented and discussed. Almost 100 water managers and decision makers from over 10 European countries gathered during the final conference.

This report gives an overview of the proceedings of the workshops, discussion sessions, plenary presentations and the political expert forum, which was held during the conference.

The programme of the meeting was as follows:

	Tuesday 23 October 2012	Wednesday 24 October 2012
Morning	8:30 Coffee and registration 9:30 - 10:00 Introduction to the workshops 10:00 – 13:00 Workshops 1. Identifying objectives and measures in Flood Risk Management Plans 2. Multilevel governance in border regions	8:30 - 9:00 Coffee and registration 9:00-11:00 Seminar: Cross border Implementation of the FD 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break 11:30 – 12:30 Political Expert Forum on cross border flood risk management
Lunch	13:00 – 14:00 Lunch and registration	9:00 - 14:30: Project market 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch
Afternoon	14:00 Welcome and official opening of the conference 14:30 – 16:00 Presentation of River Basins and pilots 16:15 – 16:30 Presentation INTERREG IVC 16:30 – 17:00 Presentation Final FLOOD-WISE results and report 17:00 – 17:30 FLOOD-WISE, what's it good for? An independent assessment on the added value and the practicability of the learning process of FLOOD-WISE 14:30 - 19:00: Project market	13:30 Presentations from the Project Market 14:10 Task Force on Cross Border Water Governance 14:30 Boarding for boat excursion to Meuse, also including a visit to the Jesuit caves and dinner on board Closure
Evening	19:00 Dinner and sightseeing in the city of Maastricht	+/- 21:00 Arrival back in Maastricht and debarkation

Day 1: interactive workshops and presentation of results

Introduction to FLOOD-WISE

Mr. Alfred Evers, representative of the Euregion Meuse-Rhine, lead partner of FLOOD-WISE, gave a brief introduction to the project and the set-up of the conference.

In FLOOD-WISE, two themes were distinguished:

- Implementation of the Floods Directive
- Cross-border issues

FLOOD-WISE dealt with issues concerning flood risk management and the related governance issues, at a supra-national level. The FLOOD-WISE practices of implementing the requirements from the Floods Directive across borders were two years ahead of the real implementation of the Floods Directive. And, in fact opposite to the national approaches of this implementation, FLOOD-WISE followed a bottom-up approach by involving local and regional (water) authorities in the project. The results from the bottom-up approach were assessed and endorsed by decision makers and politicians.

Interactive workshops

Identifying objectives and measures in flood risk management plans

In advance of the workshop important objectives were identified for each stage of the flood risk management cycle. These objectives were discussed by the participants and if necessary revised and completed. The discussion showed not only which objectives were considered important in a cross-border approach but also how the development of objectives can be accomplished. This can support the active involvement of interested parties as asked in Article 10 of the Floods Directive. In the second part of the workshop, which was based on the participants' knowledge of their river basins and the impressions gained during the previous discussion, participants used a catalogue of potential measures. In this catalogue the participants weighed the importance of the individual measures that had been distinguished in advance. This led to a list of measure ranked according to participants' assessment.

The workshop moderator, Mr. Kai Deutschmann, concluded that the workshop participants achieved results in 2.5 hours that usually will take two weeks of work. The workshop resulted in a collection of 44 objectives for 11 stages of flood risk management cycle and an indication of the priority of measures and fields of action.

Furthermore, the following was concluded:

- More (specific) indicators are required for the various objectives.
- Different EU directives (WFD, FD, etc.) should be connected to each other before flood risk management objectives will be prioritized.
- Transboundary effects were not included in the exercise.

Serious game: Cross-Border Flood Risk Management

For FLOOD-WISE a so-called "serious game" was developed. The game simulates managing flood risks across borders, involving various levels of government and different stakeholders. During the final conference, the role-playing game was played in two separate workshops.

Playing the game

In the game, an imaginative river, River Green, flows through the countries Blueand and Yellowland. In both countries flood problems occur every now and then, but the land use in the floodplain differs between the countries. And, the institutional organization of topics like flood risk management, spatial planning and emergency planning differs between the countries. Responsibilities and interests of the various governmental levels are organized dissimilar on each side of the border.

In two workshop groups, for each imaginary country, a team was formed, consisting of representatives of governments and stakeholders. Each player in the game got a role, with its own responsibilities and interest. The teams received the task to develop a framework for cross border flood risk management of the River Green.

In two and a half hours time, the teams developed a national strategy addressing the diverging national interests and took part in international negotiations with their neighbouring country.

Conclusions of the game workshops

The objective of the game is to get an understanding of dealing with diverging interests – within a country and between countries. And, to practice the process of achieving results in a multilevel governance setting. After playing the game, participants of the workshop concluded among other things the following:

- In reality every country has its own water strategy from the past. While cooperating, they have to adapt strategies, which will be difficult.
- For international negotiations it is important to create a pleasant political atmosphere. Trust is needed. Therefore it is important to learn to know the neighbours. This takes time in real life.
- For transboundary negotiations the countries need a legal umbrella for finding solutions. For example in the form of an international commission or a legal agenda. Shared data are necessary to start discussions from the same information level.
- Language problems were solved with an interpreter. Lesson learned: in international negotiations a professional interpreter is required.
- For solving upstream-downstream flood risk issues, you need a common sense of urgency. In reality that is not always the case.
- In discussing upstream-downstream conflicts, don't hesitate to address cross-border financing. This may lead to cost-effective and innovative interventions.
- In reality river issues are traded of with other issues on national level; regional cooperation is often more effective for common people.

While playing the game, not the outcome is important, but the process. By playing games, participants may get more courage in real life. In addition, playing this serious game learns participants to do the formal things more playful.

Introductory speech by Mr. Bovens

Mr. Bovens, Queens Commissioner of the province of Limburg in the Netherlands welcomed the participants of the final conference. In his welcome speech he stressed that borders are part of everyday life and that they should be looked upon as an opportunity, not as an obstacle. Because water doesn't recognize borders, cooperation in water management is required. Therefore Bovens acknowledged that follow-up to the actions in FLOOD-WISE is very important. A first step could be made with the Task Force on Water Governance that was presented during the final conference. The full text of Mr. Bovens' speech is included in Appendix A.

Presentation of results from FLOOD-WISE river basins

The partners from the six river basins of FLOOD-WISE presented the main results of the project. In Appendix B the presentations are included. Every presentation was concluded with an overview of future actions for the river basin. These are summarized below.

Future actions Sotla

In the Sotla/Vonarje lake area the following issues will be at stake in the near future:

- Cross border promotion of the Sotla FRMP.
- Final definition of state border with the arbitration procedure.
- Bilateral national and local agreement on the Sotla area
- Determination of the altitude of point of the permanent lake with respect to all aspects and interests for revitalisation, including flood protection.
- Realization of adequate water quality by sewage systems
- Cleaning of the area (mud, trees, bushes etc.) and consolidation of river banks
- Consolidation of Prišlin and Vonarje dams to restore the lake.
- Implementation of utility infrastructure (electricity, drinking water etc.).
- Implementation of touristic infrastructure.

Future actions Meuse

In the Meuse basin the FLOOD-WISE partners agreed on the following future actions:

- Dissemination of FLOOD-WISE results in the working group Hydrology of the International Meuse Commission.
- Improving online sharing of discharge- and water level data.
- Examination of cross-border effects of (planned) measures.
- Further harmonization of flood hazard and flood risk maps and management plans.

Future actions Rur

In the Rur basin the partners agreed on the following future actions:

- Experiences and results of FLOOD-WISE will be disseminated and used in the process of the (national) implementation of the EU Flood Directive.
- The FLOOD-WISE pilot team for the Rur will be institutionalized under the bilateral German – Dutch commission on cross border water systems.
- A feasibility study will be executed concerning a transnational model and flood forecasting system for the Rur river basin.
- Cross-border contacts between the Netherlands, Germany, Wallonia and Flanders will be strengthened further.

Future actions Elbe

In the Elbe basin the following actions are foreseen in the near future:

- Dissemination of the FRMP in English as pilot version for other FRMP.
- The FRMP “Elbe near Muehlberg” will be part of the formal implementation of the EU Floods Directive.
- The FRMP “Elbe near Muehlberg” will be shared with the affected districts and municipalities.
- The cross-border maps “Hřensko – Schmilka” will be shared with the affected municipalities
- The FLOOD-WISE results will be presented to and discussed with the RBC Elbe and ICPER.
- The involved authorities will continue their cross-border cooperation.

Future actions Bug

In the Bug basin the partners agreed on the following issues at stake for the future:

- The countries of the Bug River Basin (Poland, Belarus and Ukraine) stress the importance of cross-border contacts and cross-border information exchange in times of floods; focus on calamity management and early warning will be important and useful.
- Strengthening cross-border contacts and forming a trilateral Bug River Basin Committee may increase the efficiency of flood risk management in the Bug River Basin.

- Cross-border cooperation should include exchange of data, insight in each others problems and benefits, insight in the right partners who are responsible for the various goals and tasks.
- International projects will be proposed regarding more detailed specifications of the Flood Risk Maps and Flood Risk Management Plan for the entire transboundary river Bug, based on better cartographic information and a common hydrological and hydraulic model.
- International projects will be proposed on the development of a prototype of an Early Warning System for the river Bug, with installation of automatic hydrometeorological stations on river Bug.

Future actions Somes

In the Somes river basin the partners made the following appointments for future action:

- Continue the cross-border coordination and harmonization of water levels: information about water levels and the water level alert stages is already exchanged and harmonized across the border. This coordination and harmonization will be continued in the future.
- Handover cross-border flood maps to the affected municipalities. Producing a common flood risk map adhering perfectly to the national/states design is impossible. However, the available data in both countries allow creating separate risk maps according to the Hungarian or Romanian methodology for the whole cross-border project area. These hazard maps offer the individual user a fast but comprehensive view of the risk situation in its own as well as in the neighbouring country without the need to familiarize with another design.
- Continuing cross-border cooperation between responsible authorities. During the development of the common FRMP the cooperation between the responsible authorities of Hungary and Romania was intensified significantly. Additionally stakeholders took part in the development of the FRMP. This exchange across national borders will be continued to achieve improvements and further progress on the working level.

Presentation of INTERREG IVC

Mrs. Milos of the Joint Technical Secretariat of INTERREG presented the state of play and perspectives of European interregional cooperation. Her presentation is included in Appendix C. After explaining the EU Cohesion and Regional Policy she linked the FLOOD-WISE approach and results to the objectives of the Policy. From the perspective of INTERREG IVC, Mrs. Milos addressed amongst others the following strengths of FLOOD-WISE:

- Focus on exchange of experience within and between river basins.
- Working with pilot teams.
- Identification and transfer of good practices.
- Specificity of the partner regions (river basins).
- Wide geographical coverage.
- Close cooperation with JTS during the project.

Furthermore Mrs. Milos gave an indication of the future of interregional cooperation and the funding through INTERREG.

Presentation of the final products

The project manager of FLOOD-WISE, Mr. Tolkamp, gave a short overview of the FLOOD-WISE partnership and working process from 2010 to 2012. He highlighted a number of conclusions regarding cross-border flood risk management and the instruments from the Floods Directive. And he gave a short overview of the project recommendations towards The EU, national governments and regional and local authorities. Finally he explained the FLOOD-WISE achievements and final products.

Mr. Kersten, the regional Minister for Water of the Province of Limburg and President of the project, officially presented the final report of FLOOD-WISE. He stressed that flood risk management is much more than building flood protection. He referred to FLOOD-WISE as a laboratory for the implementation of flood risk management, following the Floods Directive. And as a laboratory for cross-border cooperation and communication.

Next, Mrs. Koeppel from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) reflected on the project results. She noticed that climate change had played only a limited role in FLOOD-WISE but that it is a very important factor for flood risk management to take into account. Furthermore Mrs. Koeppel concluded that the FLOOD-WISE results need to be shared on regional, national and international level. Therefore the FLOOD-WISE network should be extended, e.g. by linking to the UNECE network.

Next, Mr. Cruz from the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) reflected on the learning process and products of FLOOD-WISE. Cruz addressed the fact that the obstacles and opportunities, which have been identified in FLOOD-WISE, are at stake worldwide. He stated that the regional approach of cross-border issues that has been followed in FLOOD-WISE in general is more effective than a national approach.

The presentations of Mr. Tolkamp, Mrs. Koeppel and Mr. Cruz are included in Appendix D. There you can also find the full text of Mr. Kersten's speech.

Day 2: Seminar and Political Expert Forum

Seminar: cross-border implementation of the Floods Directive

The second day of the final conference started with a seminar on “cross-border implementation of the Floods Directive”. For an audience of 80 people, approaches from various countries were presented. The presentations are included in Appendix E. The seminar was moderated by Mr. Luitzen Bijlsma.

First Mr. Koen Maeghe, from NV de Scheepvaart in Belgium, illustrated the history of cross-border cooperation between Flanders and the Netherlands specific for the Common Meuse. He explained the basis for cooperation and showed some examples of improved cooperation, like the building of a common hydrological network, exchange of data and common statistical analysis. Based on this cooperation, agreements were accepted about the cross-border implementation of the Floods Directive.

Next Mr. Lucjan Goś from the Regional Water Management Authority in Warsaw (PL) and Polish Ukrainian Commission on border waters in Lublin (PL) explained the cross-border cooperation in the Bug basin. The cooperating countries in the Bug basin concern both EU and non-EU countries. Mr. Goś stressed obstacles in the cooperation due to lack of appropriate means and resentment between the countries as a consequence of difficult historical relationships. Furthermore some practical limitations exist, like the presence of a military zone along the river. The countries Poland, Belarus and Ukraine cooperate on the basis of bilateral agreements and the UNECE Water Convention. A trilateral agreement however is absent.

Mr. Péter Backonji from the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) presented the coordinating and supporting approach of the ICPDR for the basin-wide implementation of the Floods Directive. This approach is in line with the tasks of the Action Programme for Sustainable Flood Protection in the Danube River and concerns matters like harmonized flood hazard and flood risk maps, data exchange, early warning and informing the public.

Finally Mr. Mark Adamson of the Office of Public Works in Ireland and chair of the EU Working Group F gave a presentation of the work of ‘Working Group F’ concerning the implementation of the Floods Directive. The objective of Working Group F is to support the implementation of the Floods Directive. In several workshops specific issue concerning the implementation are being discussed, resulting in recommendations and guidance for implementation.

Political Expert Forum

During the Political Expert Forum a panel of politicians and experts in cross-border flood risk management discussed a number of statements. The audience was involved in the discussion by having the opportunity to vote for the statements. The panel members were:

- Mr. L. Goś, Regional water management Authority in Warsaw (PL)
- Dr. Dejan Komatina, Secretary of the International Sava River Basin Commission
- Mr. Cyriel Lebens, Vice chairman of the Board of Roer and Overmaas Regional Water Authority (NL).
- Mr. W. Schreurs, Secretary General of the International Meuse Commission
- Mr. A. Szentivanyi, National Directorate for Water and Environment (HU)

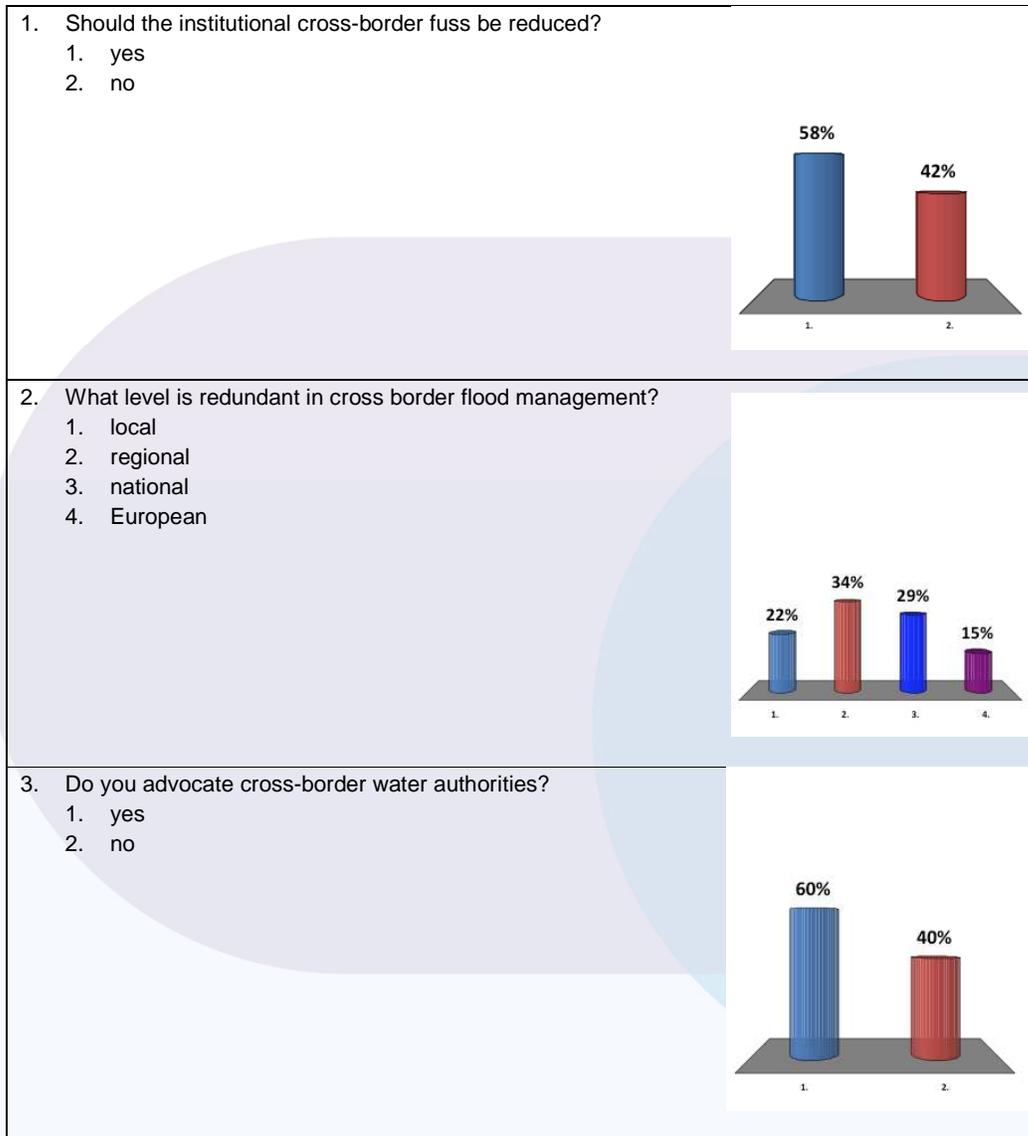
Chairman of the panel discussion was Mr. L. Bijlsma, Co-Coordinator National Flood Protection Programme and National Water Governance Treaty in the Netherlands.

After a short introduction, the following statements were discussed:

1. Should the institutional cross-border fuss be reduced?
2. What level is redundant in cross border flood management?
3. Do you advocate cross-border water authorities?

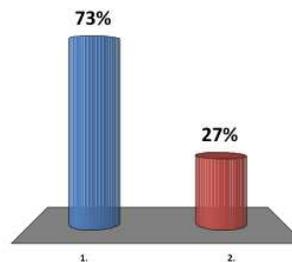
4. Are you willing to delegate or mandate responsibilities to a cross-border water authority?
5. Can an international river basin commission be transformed into a cross border water-authority?
6. Should there be a water service tax for flood protection
7. Should this be a solidarity tax or a regionally differentiated one?
8. There is insufficient guidance by the EU how to integrate objectives from nature-, agriculture- and water quality policies in flood risk management
9. Are you willing to continue the flood-wise network in the future, at your own expense?

The audience voted as follows for the statements:



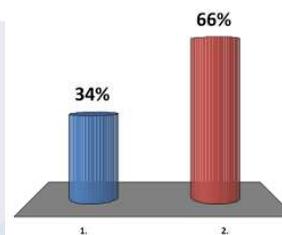
4. Are you willing to delegate or mandate responsibilities to a cross-border water authority?

- 1. yes
- 2. no



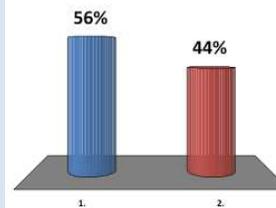
5. Can an international river basin commission be transformed into a cross border water-authority?

- 1. yes
- 2. no



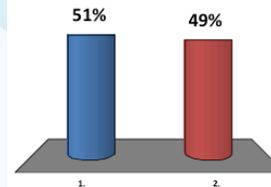
6. Should there be a water service tax for flood protection

- 1. yes
- 2. no



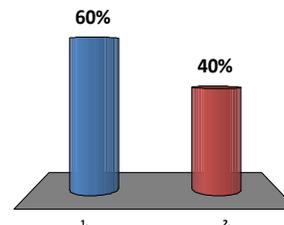
7. Should this be a solidarity tax or a regionally differentiated one?

- 1. solidarity tax
- 2. regionally differentiated tax



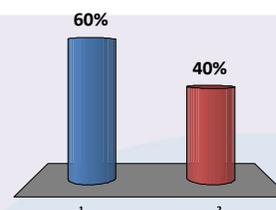
8. There is insufficient guidance by the EU how to integrate objectives from nature-, agriculture- and water quality policies in flood risk management

1. Agree
2. Disagree



9. Are you willing to continue the flood-wise network in the future, at your own expense?

1. Yes
2. No



During the panel discussion there was an active involvement of the audience. An important issue in the discussion was the relation between the level of government and the scale of cross-border problems. Not the number of government levels involved appears to be the problem, but the way that they are involved. When considering cross-border water authorities that become responsible of tasks that are now attributed to various governmental levels, democratic legitimization becomes an important issue. It was concluded that small-scale problems should be solved on a local or regional level, in communication between cross-border partners. One of the reasons that border regions are lagging behind, economically and in the sense of water safety, is a consequence of the lack of communication across borders on the right level. Cross-border communication in border regions provides opportunities for innovation of flood-risk management approaches. Because water doesn't stop at borders, it connects countries and regions. As such it is a means to start cross-border communication, on a local level but also on regional or national level.

Presentations from the project market

Parallel to the conference a project market was organized. On the project market, international projects presented their efforts and results. During the last afternoon of the conference the following projects and initiatives gave a short 'pitch' presentation:

- Cross-border Platform for Regional Water Management in Deltarhine-east.
- AMICE: adaptation to the Meuse to the Impacts of Climate Evolutions.
- AQUADRA: A European project for transregional cooperation in managing water resources in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine.
- WISE-RTD: Water information system for Europe.

The presentations are included in Appendix F.

Task Force Water Governance

Mr. Alfred Evers, project coordinator of FLOOD-WISE presented an initiative to give follow-up to the efforts and results of FLOOD-WISE: the so-called Task Force for Water Governance in cross-border regions. The Task Force will be a network that aims at joint problem solving of problems that are related to the implementation and elaboration of FLOOD-WISE results. Furthermore it will link to international networks like the EU and UN to stay in tune with important developments in water management. And, its main goal will be to initiate and support new initiatives and project proposals regarding cross-border issues, water management and climate change, using the network associated with the Task Force.. The presentation of Mr. Evers is included in Appendix G.

Appendices

