

# Report EWA 10th Brussels Conference

## EWA successfully organised its 10th annual Brussels Conference under the title „Water in the Cities“

The European Water Association (EWA) organised on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014 its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Brussels Conference. The event started with the prelude session “Water Policy of Tomorrow” that has been kindly hosted by the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the EU. After welcome addresses by Dr. Waltraud Ellenrieder-Woratschek, representing the Free State of Bavaria, and EWA Vice President Károly Kovács (HU), the evening started with a keynote speech on the water policy of tomorrow by Marianne Wenning, Director of Directorate C: Quality of Life, Water and Air, DG Environment of the European Commission. Wenning emphasized in her speech that the new European Commission of Jean-Claude Juncker has set priorities on the topics growth and jobs. This is applied in the Directorate C of DG Environment under the perspective of “Water and Jobs”. The Blueprint process in 2012 has set already the focus of the future water policy. Only half of the European waters will reach good ecological status by 2015. In many member states there are still implementation deficits. In this relation, Mrs. Wenning underlined the importance of the implementation of cost-covering water pricing. Environmental and resources costs are often not considered. She pointed out that it is necessary to reduce the water losses, to include more strongly the agricultural sector into the water management matters, to protect river bank strips from environmental stress, to improve and develop further the Water Information System WISE, and to define which priority substances have to be included in a “watch list”, according to the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Finally, Mrs. Wenning reminded that in 2015 the first management cycle of the WFD ends and the Second River Basin Management Plans have to be submitted. They have to be evaluated and implemented in the river basins.



*Marianne Wenning, European Commission*



*Wendy Francken, VLARIO and Chairwoman of the EWA European Policy Committee*



The new EWA Water Manifesto was presented to the participants during the prelude session „Water Policy of Tomorrow“ and is available via [www.ewa-online.eu](http://www.ewa-online.eu)

The second keynote speech was given by the MEP Albert Deß who highlighted the importance of water. He made a reference to the introduction of the WFD and the UN resolution from 2010 on the human right to water. According to the WFD, water is not a commercial product, and despite the human right to drinking water, there are still more than 900 million people living with no access to clean water. The water policy has to fulfil in this context an important task. In Europe, a better implementation of the WFD is essential. Conclusively, Mr. Deß points out that water must remain a municipal responsibility and that water should not disappear through a loophole which a context of a free trade agreement might offer. As pointed by Mr. Deß, we can live without many other things, but we cannot live without water.



Albert Deß, MEP

Mrs. Wenning, Prof. Martin Grambow (DE) – Bavarian State Ministry, Prof. Helmut Kroiss (AT) – IWA President, Károly Kovács (HU), EWA Vice President and Durk Krol (BE) – Director of WssTP, discussed during a panel discussion, moderated by Wendy Francken, Chairwoman of the EWA European Policy Committee, about the necessary developments in the water sector. Mrs. Francken introduced to the participants and panellists the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the EWA Water Manifesto. In its Water Manifesto EWA gives statements on the topics: Water and Asset management, Water and Climate Change Adaptation, Water and Agriculture and Water and Energy and provides new ideas for the water policy in Europe. The new issue can be downloaded from the EWA website. Furthermore, Prof. Grambow emphasised the importance of the relation between water and agriculture. Research and innovation has also great significance, as pointed by Prof. Kroiss and Mr. Krol. This must be strongly supported by the European Commission. Wenning and Kovacs stressed that more transparency in the water sector is necessary, especially in the case of cost-recovery water pricing.



EWA cooperates with the European Club of ICOLD and with IWA (from left to right Károly Kovács, EWA Vice President, Dr. Guido Mazza, President of the ICOLD European Club, Prof. Helmut Kroiss, President IWA, Johannes Lohaus, EWA Secretary General)



Panel Discussion (from left to right) Prof. Grambow, Wenning, Kovács, Prof. Kroiss, Krol

The official program of the event was closed with EWA signing of two Memorandums of with the International Water Association (IWA), as well as with the European Club of the International Commission of Large Dams (ICOLD). Johannes Lohaus, Secretary General of EWA stressed the importance of cooperation between the organisations. Furthermore, EWA is in close collaboration with the Water Environmental Federation (WEF) from USA and the Japan Sewage Works Association (JSWA). Together with WEF and JSWA, EWA will organise the 5<sup>th</sup> Joint Specialty Conference in Washington DC in June 2015.



Wendy Francken, VLARIO and Chairwoman of the EWA European Policy Committee was the moderator of the conference

The second day of the 10<sup>th</sup> EWA Brussels Conference took place under the motto “Water in the Cities”. The introduction was given by Wendy Francken the chairwoman of the EWA European Policy Committee who moderated the conference in a very pleasant manner. The first presentation was given by Joachim D’Eugenio form DG Environment on the topic Water in the cities – European legislation. He pointed out that, already 75% of the European population lives in urban areas with this rate will grow further. Therefore, the necessary investments should be done carefully, a good water pricing policy has to be introduced and the topic water reuse should be put high on the agenda. Mr. D’eugenio discussed legislation framework derived from the WFD, the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, (UWWTD), the Drinking Water Directive and the Groundwater Directive. He took up the issues mentioned by Marianne Wenning during the prelude of the conference, and especially emphasised the implementation deficiency of the Member States in the European Union.



Joachim D’Eugenio , European Commission

Subsequently Robert Schröder, also from DG Environment presented the results of the Initiative European Innovation Partnership on Water (EIP). He explained that this program aims to be a source for innovation in the water sector. Within the currently running projects different stakeholders from different sectors are brought up together. Mr. Schröder gave examples from the agricultural economy, financial management and the water management. The core of the EIP on water is the so called Working Groups, where members are working together on a voluntary basis. The European Commission does not foresee special funding opportunities for the EIP Working Groups. During the last call for Working Groups, more than 100 proposals were submitted. Thereof, 25 particularly qualified projects groups were selected. A specially developed Market Place can be found on the homepage of the EIP on water [www.eip-water.eu](http://www.eip-water.eu) with further information.



*Robert Schröder, European Commission*



*Bert Bosseler, IKT*

Prof. Bosseler from the Institute for Underground Infrastructure (IKT), Germany, presented very specifically the topic “Asset Management - a new trend and challenge for water and wastewater infrastructure”. At the beginning of his presentation Prof. Bosseler pointed out the enormous value represented by the public and sewer systems. The value of the urban water network in Europe can be estimated to about 1,300 billion Euros for sewer systems and 600 billion Euros for water supply systems. The key role of maintaining this infrastructure belongs to the municipalities. They have the responsibility to coordinate the cooperation between all stakeholders, such as the owner, the operator and the service provider. In addition, he emphasised that one should be able to think in systems instead of considering separate constructions. Only in this way it will be possible to optimise the implemented financial solutions.

The 7th World Water Forum will take place in 2015 in South Korea. The Danish Water Forum has started the regional process for the World Water Forum for Europe. DWF aims to bring the topic of urban wastewater on the agenda. The new EWA Water Manifesto provides good basis for this subject. Miriam Feilberg from DWF presented the results from a workshop that took place the day before the EWA Brussels Conference. She highlighted the importance of the topics capacity building, water and hygiene and adaptation to climate change.



Miriam Feilberg, DWF



Prof. Helmut Kroiss, IWA

Prof. Helmut Kroiss gave a presentation about Water and Development on a world scale. He pointed out that the world population is not growing infinitely, but the growth will stabilise when reaching 10 billion people. The regional and climatic differences have to be taken into consideration when discussing water management issues. Monsoon regions as such, need considerably different water management strategies as European regions. Prof. Kroiss stressed that energy needs to be used wisely, but water resources protection and wastewater treatment have much higher importance than energy saving. Concerning the topics of water and agriculture Europe is making a progress; that is not the case of the current situation in the United States. The WFD is probably the best developed piece of water legislation worldwide. Prof. Kroiss called for to keep in focus the water management objectives for the next years, since good water protection can be reached only by the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans.

In the following presentation, Dr. Mazza explored the topic of flood protection. He referred to the advantages and disadvantages of water storage. There are more than 50,000 large dams worldwide. Barrages can be used in a multifunctional way. Water power is the most comprehensive renewable energy source. Dams prevent flooding and enable a secure shipping, hence helps to ensure water provision for households, industry and agriculture. From an environmental point of view, the most critical point is when river continuity is interrupted. It is vital to develop measures undermining this. Alongside of the ecological aspects, Dr. Mazza emphasised the need to rehabilitate dams because of their age. This is one of the biggest challenges for the future. The increased significance when operating the dams is to be able to achieve more of the goals than originally planned.



*Dr. Guido Mazza, ICOLD European Club*



Professor Marina Bergen Jensen of Copenhagen University presented the results from the project “Triple Helix”. This project focuses on how to develop new concepts for urban drainage. The group project, which was executed from 2010 to 2014, had 150 partners and consisted of 14 subprojects. Beside its complexity, the communication between the various project partners was an important aspect of the project as a whole. Practical communication exercises were an important component of every project group meeting. The intensive communication of the project partners internally added an interesting value to the project as a whole. Fields of research and development were among others, permeable street and road fixations, soil for stormwater treatment, disinfection of overflow basins, aspects of green roofs on rain drainage. During the project, the networking was improved vastly and important impulses for product development were made.

Mrs. Raasch from the Emschergenossenschaft reported on the reconstruction of the Emscher system in North Rhine-Westphalia. During the periods of the coal mining industry in the Ruhr area, the river of Emscher was used for the surface derivation of the wastewater in the area, and therefore strongly deformed river profile. After the end of the coal mining in the Ruhr area, the reconstruction of the Emscher System and the recreation of the river have started. In order to keep the wastewater away from the river, 400 km of new sewer tunnels were built. 350 km of the main watercourses were recovered. A special importance has the use of stormwater. In 2005, 13 cities in that region have taken the responsibility to decrease the stormwater runoff with 15% until 2020 through decentralised measures. The WFD gave an additional push to the activities related to the Emscher area. An integrated water management is necessary to address the challenges of climate change and demographic development. Mrs. Raasch emphasised that a water sensible urban development is only possible when all relevant stakeholders cooperate. Though a common planning, joint activities are possible.



*Ulrike Raasch, Emschergenossenschaft*

*/ Lippeverband*

Richard Elelman from the Netwerch<sub>2</sub>O presented the Project of City Blueprints. This project is part of the EIP on Water. During this project the so called Blue City Indicator (BCI) was developed, that can be determined for every city. So far 30 cities/regions took part in the project where 24 indicators were evaluated with the value between 0 and 10. The average value of the indicators represents the Blue City Indicator. Elelman pointed out at the end of his presentation the broad participation of relevant Stakeholders.

Last but not least, the official program of the conference ended with a presentation by Mrs. Akhmouch from OECD. She presented the results of a current OECD survey on the use of water in the cities. Wide range of areas was surveyed, which included both financial and technical aspects as well as the available human resources. Mrs. Akhmouch pointed out that the survey has not been completed yet and other cities are still able to participate in this study. The final report will be published by the OECD in June or July 2015.



Richard Elelman, Netwerch<sub>2</sub>O



Aziza Akhmouch, OECD



Handover of EWA Water Manifesto from Wendy Francken to Birgit Collin-Langen, MEP.

As in previous years, the Brussels conference was characterized both by the international nature of the participants and the interesting and animated discussion of the individual presentations in 2014. The presentation slides are available for free download on the homepage of the EWA. A picture gallery is available that gives all interested parties an impression of the conference. The 11th EWA Brussels Conference will take place on 16th and 17th November 2015.

*Johannes Lohaus*

Johannes Lohaus

EWA Secretary General