



EIP Water

Boosting opportunities – Innovating water

EIP Water – Smart Rivers Network (AG 224) Newsletter #1 - Nov. 2015

The Smart Rivers Network Action Group promotes multi-stakeholder river contracts for application in Eastern and Central European countries with methods and tools to overcome administrative limitations.



Delegates at the 10th National Table of River Contracts, Milan (IT) 15 and 16 October 2015

Smart Rivers AG Impacting European Policy:



l to r: Mario Clerici; Virna Venerucci; Massimo Bastiani (Coord. Smart Rivers Network AG), Patrizia Valenti, Giovanni La Via (President of the Env. Commission of the European Parliament), Viviane Iacone.

The inaugural meeting of the Smart Rivers Network AG, took place as part of the 10th National Table of River Contracts on 15th 16th October in Milan. The event, organised in collaboration with the Lombardy Region and Italian Ministry of Environment, was attended by Mr Giovanni La Via, President of the Environmental Commission of the European Parliament. He was interested in the contribution that our AG could give to the implementation to the aspects of the governance/participation in the next revision of Dir. 2000/60/CE otherwise known as the Water Framework Directive.

This provides a fantastic opportunity for the Smart Rivers Network AG to promote their individual knowledge and experience of river contracts and local river management agreements directly to the European Commission.

First Smart Rivers Partners Funding Success!

We are pleased to announce that an application to the Central European Initiative 2015 Italian Know-How Exchange Programme (KEP) between Smart Rivers members Alta Scuola, Italy and the State Enterprise Basin Water Management Authority, Moldova has been successful. The Smart River Governance: Experiences in the Mirror from Italy to Moldova – **SMA.RI.GO.** has been awarded €38,785 and will ensure the exchange of best practices in River Management from west to east.

Milan River Contracts Conference - Thoughts and Feedback:

The Smart Rivers Network Communications Officer Paul Chapman reflects on the key messages coming out from the 10th Italian River Contracts Conference in Milan:

1. Rivers don't follow administrative borders. This can lead to either synergy or a breakdown of responsibilities across areas/regions/countries.
2. Issues of language and cultural barriers – Interventions are delivered in local areas but the different agencies involved do not speak the same institutional languages. But, if industry can learn how to work cross border (eg power plants) why can't river professionals? What can we learn from other sectors?
3. Funding is an important catalyst but the results will need to show a national or European impact however, Local Government by its nature is inward looking. In addition There is a need for national and regional agencies to engage with Local Government to deliver better outcomes, however 'closed' they may seem to be.
4. The scales of cooperation are very different; how does the international work on a local level and vice versa? How can this gap be bridged? Possibly by looking at smaller steps and more strategic partnerships.

Local to Regional to National to European.

This takes more time and effort but makes for stronger strategic partnerships

5. A Memorandum of Understanding or a Manifesto between partners can make a decisive difference. But there can be a problem with 'translating' the inter-institutional languages involved. There are examples of transnational cooperation with projects learning to communicate and speak the same language so why not institutions in the same country?
6. It is important not to 're-invent the wheel' but to use existing tools, laws and policies to their full capabilities. This may involve an institutional change of ethos and ownership.
7. It's important to ask "what is important to each stakeholder?" But even more so to regard oneself as a stakeholder.

I am a stakeholder – we are all stakeholders.

This means there is more of a reason to engage – we are all on the same side!

8. Communication, communication, communication! Make use of the visual impact of river restoration particularly in urban areas. Stakeholders can then find their own level of participation and interest.

Changing the dialogue from 'What River?' to 'MY RIVER!'.



Commill Gardens, Lewisham, London – before and after



Register now for the [EIP Water Conference on 10 February 2016 in Leeuwarden \(NL\)](#)

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All photos provided by Smart Rivers AG Members.

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