



Editorial

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to introduce Water Talk 2/2005, the newsletter of the Central and Eastern European water stakeholders. The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is a working partnership among all those involved in water management: government agencies, public institutions, private companies, professional organizations, multi-lateral development agencies and others committed to the Dublin-Rio principles and IWRM. In Central and Eastern Europe, we provide an inclusive platform for organizations promoting IWRM principles in 10 countries of Central and Eastern Europe – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

This issue brings insight to our activities on the regional and country levels. During the summer, some countries of the region were seriously hit by floods. To respond to this threat, GWP CEE has taken an active part in

the joint WMO/GWP Association Program for Flood Management" (APFM). Within the frame of APFM, GWP CEE works on improving communication between professional flood warning centers and the public.

Recent years also have seen the rapid growth of interest in public participation in a wide range of sectors. Public participation has gained wide recognition on different levels of governance as a key principle for water management. In this context, Country Water Partnerships in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia have actively contributed to the success of the Danube Day 2005 celebrations.

In addition, you will find more news from GWP's global family, a review of the most recent publications, upcoming events and much more. Dear readers, you all are invited to contribute to upcoming issues of Water Talk with your stories, projects and news. If you would like to receive more copies or simply if you have any comments on this issue, feel free to contact us. ■

the Editor

Calendar of Events

GWP CEE Council Meeting

14–16 October 2005

Prague, Czech Republic

GWP CEE Stakeholders meeting in Ukraine

1–2 December 2005

Kiev, Ukraine

Wastewater treatment and WFD implementation in CEE Danube countries

1 December 2005

Bratislava, Slovakia

GWP CEE Sustainable Sanitation meeting

2 December 2005

Bratislava, Slovakia

8th ICPDR Ordinary Meeting

12–13 December 2005

Vienna, Austria

Boats united again on Danube Day

THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (GWP CEE) CONTINUED WITH ITS INITIATIVE TO UNITE THE BOATS ON THE DANUBE RIVER. BOATS "GREETED THE DANUBE" ON JUNE 29TH AT 14:00 O'CLOCK WITH BOAT HORNS IN MOST DANUBE COUNTRIES.

One of the most eminent present and future tasks of governments, experts and all of society is to ensure a sufficient supply of quality drinking water for the human population and the environment. Without the firm and continuous commitment of the entire population, this challenging task cannot be met.

In October 2000, The European Parliament and European Union Council accepted Directive 2000/60 EC. This legislation established a framework for community action within the field of water policy, which came to be known, in shortened form, as the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Because water does not know any boundaries, the WFD is implemented on national and international levels, specifically

with regard to the protection and usage of water resources. Citizens and civil society organizations can only participate and assist in solving water problems if they are properly informed.

On the international level in the Danube River Basin, the ICPDR deals with WFD implementation. The ICPDR has designated June 29th as Danube Day, in order to raise awareness of the importance of water. It is a festive event featuring water-related games, exhibitions, field trips and other public awareness-raising activities in all of the Danube River Basin countries.

Last year, boats in some parts of the Danube River basin joined celebrations initiated by GWP Hungary, by sounding the "Danube Greeting" (three repeated signals; one short, one long). In 2005, GWP CEE again united boats on June 29th at 14:00 o'clock in cooperation with Country



CREDIT: GWP CEE

Boats "Greeted the Danube" on 29 June at 14:00 o'clock

Water Partnerships in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, navigation authorities and passenger ship companies from up and down the Danube. During the boat trip on June 29th in Budapest, the participants of the ICPDR Stakeholders Conference enjoyed the Danube greetings which brought the attention of the public to the Danube River, a place of major celebrations and events. ■

School Children Celebrate Danube Day

IN CELEBRATION OF DANUBE DAY, GWP SLOVAKIA ORGANIZED SYMBOLIC GREETINGS FROM SCHOOLS LOCATED ON TRIBUTARIES OF THE DANUBE RIVER.



CREDIT: PASTORAL CENTER POSTARKA

Roma children from Pastoral Center in Postarka, joined Danube Day celebrations

On the morning on 29 June, instead of their regular classes, school children from the Dneperska Primary School (P.S) in Kosice in Eastern Slovakia, together with their teachers, went to the banks of the Hornad River to send their symbolic greetings in a bottle and on paper boats.

According to their class teachers, Zdenka Sarkanyova and Jana Pcolinska, children wished the entire Danube River system: "Clean water,

a variety and abundance of plant and animal life and people who care about beautiful European rivers".

They unanimously added: "We teach our pupils to respect the Hornad River which is a gift from nature; in addition, we find time to clean its banks every year. We have to bear in mind that we are not the only inhabitants on the Earth and future generations will come after us. We would like to leave the world of nature for our children in the same condition as we received it from our parents".

Schools organized similar greetings in Eastern Slovakia on the Laborec River in Humenne (Laborecka P.S.), the Topla River in Bardejov (Pastoral Center Postarka), Velke Kapusany (Gymnasium), on the Slana River in Roznava (Zeleneho strom P.S.), in Central Slovakia on the Hron River in Zvolen (Gymnasium L. Stura), in the northern Orava region in Lokca (P.S.), and also in western Slovakia on the Vah River in Ladce (P.S.).

Most of the Slovak territory belongs to the Danube River basin (96%), the rest to the Vistula River basin (4%). Although it has the largest basin, the Danube River flows in the south-west parts of the country for 172 km. Its tributaries

include the Dolna Morava, Vah, Nitra, Hron, Ipel, Slana, Bodva, Bodrog and Hornad Rivers.

The goal of this initiative was to bring Danube Day to schools outside the main Danube. Through the greetings, pupils symbolically joined with others, who celebrated this special day not only in Slovakia, but also in other countries. School children and their teachers sent greetings in the form of e-mail wishes, drawings, short poems and photos.

The best greetings were presented on June 29, 2005 in Bratislava's Cultural Park at a central celebration organized by the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with the BKIS (Bratislava Cultural and Info Centre), the City of Bratislava, the DEF, GWP, SAZP (the Slovak Environmental Agency), the SHMU (the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute), the VUVH (the Water Research Institute), and other partners.

Since 2001, GWP Slovakia has promoted Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles and building bridges between different water stakeholders. Among other GWP program areas, it actively supports awareness raising initiatives, such as World Water Day (March 22nd) and Danube Day (June 29th). ■

Sava River Day and the Danube Artists Competition in Slovenia

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING, DEF AND GWP SLOVENIJA ORGANIZED THE SAVA DAY CELEBRATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BEST DANUBE ARTISTS ON JUNE 1ST AT LAKE BOHINJ.

The members of the selection committee included Milena Janezic and Mitja Bricelj from the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Minka Vicar from the Ministry of Education, Milan Vogrin from DEF Slovenija, Vanja Debevec from the primary school network in the Skojske jame natural park and Martina Zupan from GWP Slovenija. Out of 79 sculptures sent from 16 schools, they chose the following three:

1st Prize: "Bird", artist: Kristina Arnol, mentor Marta Martelj, Primary school 16 December from Mojstrana

2nd Prize: "Glass-eyed Dragonfly", artists: Lina Iskra Vugdelija and Hanan Hadjolic, mentor Mojca Barbi, Primary school Brezice

3rd Prize: "Traces", artists: Borut Zelodec and Armin Beslagic, mentor Stojan Brezocnik, Primary school Mezica, made from waste found along the river.

Janez Podobnik, the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning and UNICEF Ambassador, Milena Zupancic, awarded the artists with books on nature. Both stressed the importance of involving the young generation in environmental and nature protection



CREDIT: M. ZUPAN/GWP SLOVENIJA

Slovenian Minister of Environment, UNICEF Ambassador and competitors

issues. On behalf of GWP Slovenija, Martina Zupan awarded all participants with Water World of Slovenia, a Handbook for Interdisciplinary Water Research, which will help the schools to learn about water. In addition, all participants received T-shirts with the Danube Day logo.



CREDIT: M. ZUPAN/GWP SLOVENIJA

The winners of knowledge quiz on nature

The celebration was very exciting for the young participants. After visiting one of the Sava River sources, the beautiful Savica Falls, and participating in different games connected with water, a quiz on water and nature was held with the winners receiving daisy garlands with sheep bells.

The participants of the celebration created a present for the Minister, a memory board with their signatures on small stones, taken from the Savica River. A pleasant picnic and different games followed. However, the most attractive part for them was the presence of both eminent guests, the Minister of the Environment and the UNICEF Ambassador. ■

Martina Zupan
GWP Slovenija

Training of Trainers on IWRM in Bulgaria

THE CENTER FOR COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE BULGARIAN INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL ASSOCIATION, GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP-BULGARIA AND SOLIDARITY WATER EUROPE – STRASBURG ORGANIZED A TRAINING OF TRAINERS ON IWRM IN SOFIA ON JULY 22-23, 2005. The training was a part of the project "Awareness Raising and Improving the Implementation of Acquis Communautaire in the Water Protection Area" supported by the EU Phare Civil Society Development Program. The goal of the training was to provide industrial enterprises with more information about IWRM and the implications of EU legislation.

Among the main topics of the training, the organizers included concepts for sustainable development and integrated water resource management, legal aspects of EU environmental policy, water resource and water use in Bulgaria, water legislation in Bulgaria and opportunities for financing environmental projects. The trainers also presented voluntary agreements of industrial enterprises for environmental management, auditing and ecolabelling, corporate governance and the role of non-governmental organizations as partners of enterprises and the government in water management. The program covered methods for training and facilitation, as well as discussions on possibilities for project multiplication and participation in different international projects and networks. It also included a study visit to the municipal waste water treatment plant "Kubratovo", located in Sofia.

The trainers were research fellows from the Institute of Economics of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), the BAS Institute of Water Problems, the BAS Institute of Legal Studies, the BAS Institute of Sociology, experts from the Ministry of Environment and Waters, the Enterprise for Environmental Activities Management, the Environmental Executive Agency, River Basin Directorates and the Center for Environmental Information and Education.

Although successful participants came from industrial enterprises, basin directorates, non-governmental organizations and consultancies and had different backgrounds and professional experience, they were willing to continue in the implementation of the project "Awareness Raising and Improving the Implementation of Acquis Communautaire in the Water Protection Area" as trainers of enterprises and facilitators of network meetings called "Partnership for Water". ■



Visit of trainers to waste water treatment plant "Kubratovo"

CREDIT: M. MOCHUROVA

Seminar for enterprises on IWRM

ON SEPTEMBER 20TH, THE CENTER FOR COMPARATIVE STUDIES, TOGETHER WITH THE BULGARIAN INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL ASSOCIATION, GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP – BULGARIA AND SOLIDARITY WATER EUROPE – STRASBURG, ORGANIZED A SEMINAR FOR ENTERPRISES ON IWRM.

The seminar took part within the framework of the project "Awareness Raising and Improving the Implementation of Acquis Communautaire in the Water Protection Area" supported by the Phare Civil Society Development Program. The overall objective of the Program is to support the role of the civil society in Bulgaria through improving its strategic approaches and capacities towards vulnerable groups and minority integration, fighting against corruption and transposition and implementation of the environment, consumer protection and social Acquis Communautaire.

The objective of the seminar was to raise the awareness of the managers of medium and large-size enterprises from food, textile, machine-building and metal-processing industries about the effects resulting from EU membership obligations in the water protection area, EU policies for IWRM, public participation and the role of NGOs. The organizers presented opportunities for the involvement of enterprises in the IWRM process and encouraged them to participate in decision-making processes. ■

The review of the East Aegean Sea Basin Region

AFTER THE SEMINAR FOR ENTERPRISES ON IWRM, THE CENTER FOR COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EAST AEGEAN SEA BASIN DIRECTORATE ORGANIZED A PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE EAST AEGEAN SEA BASIN REGION (ART. 5 OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE) ON SEPTEMBER 21ST.

The participants came from main stakeholders including the Ministry of Environment and Waters, the Environmental Commission and the Euro-integration Commission of the Parliament, district governors, municipalities, enterprises, business organizations, environmental NGOs, research institutes, universities and the media. The organizers presented the initial review of the Basin, prepared in accordance with Article 5 of the Water Framework Directive, including the risk of non-compliance with the Directive's environmental requirements and an economic analysis of water use and protected areas. As a result, proposals made in the course of the public discussion will be taken into account during the development of River Basin Management Plan and programs of measures. ■

New training kit

In many places, participatory groundwater management has an important role. This training kit has been prepared in order to bring together the scattered experience and to equip persons keen to promote participatory groundwater management. The training kit is also available on CD ROM and you can order it free of charge at info@metameta.nl. ■

IWRM training manual

A TRAINING MANUAL TO SUPPORT PEOPLE INVOLVED IN BUILDING NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS HAS BEEN PUBLISHED BY THE CAPACITY BUILDING NETWORK (CAP-NET) AND GWP. "The manual is designed to support a three to four day course," says Paul Taylor, Director of Cap-Net, "and importantly, gives guidance for the practical work that has to be done on the ground to get an accepted and realistic plan in place."

This manual, Integrated Water Management Plans: Training Manual and Operational Guide, has become the established guide for those engaged in national water strategy and planning processes where the local Country Water Partnership is involved as a facilitator. It is built around the planning cycle and links closely with the process described in the handbook, Catalyzing Change, published by the GWP Technical Committee in 2004.

The completed manual was used for the first time during an induction workshop on IWRM planning held in Nairobi, Kenya in March. This workshop brought together participants from Cape Verde, Benin, Cameroon, Eritrea, Mozambique, Swaziland – countries whose IWRM planning processes are being supported by the Netherlands – and Ethiopia, with funding from the government of the United States of America.

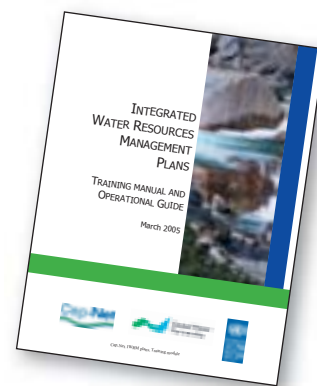
Supplementing the information contained in the manual, participants of the ongoing Canadian funded Partnership for African Water Development (PAWD) programme – from Senegal, Mal,

Kenya, Malawi and Zambia – joined the workshop to share their own experiences with their new counterparts. Taking the lead from the manual, the course programme typically started off by setting out the principles of planning and for establishing the management team for the process, and defining the roles of the persons in the team.

"Raising awareness, commitment and understanding of the process," says Leonard Ndolovu, Chair of the Swaziland Water Partnership, "especially among the political stakeholders, is key. This means identifying who are the most important and influential ministries concerning water in a country, and which ministry or department should lead the planning process."

Establishing the vision of where the country needs to be is the next crucial step. Here, the present situation needs to be analysed and a vision for the future created together with the identification of the long-term strategic goals required to achieve that vision. In this process broad stakeholder involvement is crucial in the pursuit of a sense of ownership of the objectives and principles that are codified in the strategy or plan. Securing this involvement from the onset gives greater assurance that the process, never easy, will work more smoothly, especially in the implementation phase.

In Benin the process is already well underway. "The situation analysis started in September last year [2004] is about to conclude," says Grégoire Ale, coordinator of Integrated Water Resources Management in the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Hydraulics. "The output will create a new document that will form the basis of a new Wa-



ter Policy which sets out the legal, political and institutional framework for water resources for the next decade and beyond."

Getting water into the National Development Plans is a crucial step if water is to be linked with social and economic development. "To reduce poverty yet sustain our scarce water resources," continues Ale, "water supply and sanitation, a core element of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, will be improved using more coordinated and participatory approaches to water development."

It is not possible to be prescriptive as the process will be different in every country. However in the final modules, the manual leads participants through a process of identifying the water management strategy required to fulfil the goals, and into the details of what it means to actually prepare a plan – highlighting what might be expected to be in it, proposals for political and public participation, and the timeframe for its completion.

The manual is now available in English, French and Spanish and soon in Portuguese. The various language versions can be downloaded from the Cap-Net website: www.cap-net.org. ■

Meeting of GWP Consulting Partners

THE MEETING OF CONSULTING PARTNERS (CP) HELD IN ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA ON MAY 24TH AND 25TH SUCCESSFULLY FOCUSED ON ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY THE GWP PARTNERS, ESPECIALLY THE 2005 IWRM STRATEGY AND PLANNING PROCESSES, WHILE KEEPING THE NECESSARY GOVERNANCE MATTERS TO A MINIMUM.

GWP was honored by the presence of Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. She proved to be a formidable representative of the indigenous people, capturing very effectively and conveying simply and forcefully the basic idea and necessity of an integrated approach to water resource management in order to improve the lives of everyone. This, together with the contributions of representatives from other indigenous groups from Guatemala that were represented at the meeting, was one of the most useful and in-



A fashion show featuring colourful traditional Maya textiles concluded the formal CP dinner

teresting features of this year's CP meeting. Approximately 220 people registered for the event, half of whom provided feedback through the evaluation questionnaire. The majority of participants found that the meeting met their expectations and that the breakout sessions and organization of the meeting were good. The quality of the discussions and the exchange

of information through both presentations and group discussions were highly appreciated.

The most common learning experience centered on IWRM – the concept was made clearer, the methods for implementation were better understood and the experiences shared on the IWRM strategy and planning processes were useful.

Despite the facts that Antigua was not the most accessible location and that obtaining visas for Guatemala was not easy – it was an enchanting and unique venue.

Several suggestions for the future were made, especially the need to focus on more substantive outcomes of GWP Partner work, further analysis of some of the case studies, and perhaps the inclusion of some case studies from groups outside GWP to see how they work. A full report on the presentation and discussions will be available on the GWP website www.gwpforum.org. ■

New Ecotourism Study on Lake Peipsi

THE PEIPSI CENTER FOR TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION (CTC), HAS PREPARED A NEW FEASIBILITY STUDY ON ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON THE WESTERN SHORE OF LAKE PEIPSI IN ESTONIA.

The study covers today's situation and the perspectives of ecotourism in different local municipalities around Lake Peipsi. In addition, the study provides suggestions for eco-tourism development and opportunities for project cooperation. The report, which includes an extended summary in English, is available online at the Peipsi CTC web site www.ctc.ee.

According to the study, the development of tourism could be a suitable alternative to the vanishing income from fishery and agriculture. Furthermore, the central government promotes the development of tourism through the designation of Lake Peipsi as an integral tourism area. Its unique environment, a prerequisite for tourism development, is backed up by innovative and flexible people. Virve Tuubel, the author of the study, adds: *"Lake Peipsi people have the necessary skills to guide tourists, show them creative craftwork and fishing. Through local citizens, visitors can learn more about customs in the area and, at the same time, enjoy the surroundings and have a nice rest."*

Results of the study have clearly indicated that development of the local infrastructure, in cooperation with municipalities, will facilitate the development of tourism. Also, the expansion of the geographical scope and new seasonal tourism products could attract more visitors. Local tourism enterprises will surely benefit from the wider advertisement of cultural and natural treasures as well as recreational sites.

The Peipsi CTC has prepared the study within the framework of the project "Development and Implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Program", which is funded by GEF and UNDP. For more information, please contact Virve Tuubel, Peipsi CTC at virve@ctc.ee.

Information management and public participation in transboundary water cooperation

THE WORKSHOP ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION WAS HELD IN ST. PETERSBURG ON 8–10 JUNE 2005.

The workshop was prepared in cooperation with the Center for Transboundary Cooperation – St.Petersburg and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN). IW:LEARN, the World Bank Institute and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency funded the workshop. The workshop had two main themes. The first was information management for transboundary water cooperation, including information exchange and utilization for decision-making. The second theme was public participation, including stakeholders identification; the legal aspects, institutional arrangements, education and awareness and participatory tools. The workshop participants were representatives of EECCA countries, experts involved in GEF projects in the region (Danube, Dnipro, Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Kura), EU neighbouring countries, UN organizations, international financial institutions, and regional cooperation organizations, bilateral donor agencies, the private sector and NGOs.

Tourist Database in Lake Peipsi

THE TARTU COUNTY TOURISM FOUNDATION DEVELOPED A NEW TOURISM DATABASE FOR LAKE PEIPSI.

The new database comprises local accommodation facilities and restaurants, recreational sites, hiking trails and museums on the eastern coast of Lake Peipsi. Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Ozero is an international lake shared by Estonia and the Russian Federation. The Tartu County Tourism Foundation developed the database within the framework of the BIRD project, supported by the EU INTERREG IIIB program and managed by the NGO Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (CTC). The BIRD project supports sustainable development, including tourism infrastructure, through the cooperation of local municipalities, businesses and environmental organizations. The database is available online at the Peipsi CTC web site: www.ctc.ee. For more information, please contact Kärt Leppik at kart@ctc.ee.

Corrections

On the cover page in the April issue of Water Talk, the correct description of the photo should be Lake Peipsi on the border between Estonia and Russia, Credit: P. Unt/Peipsi CTC. Water Talk apologizes for the error.

GWP CEE launches new IWRM web site

IN JUNE 2005, GWP CEE LAUNCHED ITS RE-DESIGNED WEBSITE. THE NEW SITE REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN GWP CEE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE IWRM PRINCIPLES IN CEE COUNTRIES.

It can be accessed at www.gwpceeforum.org, and is designed as a resource for governments, the civil society, the media and the public who wish to gain knowledge about sustainable management of water resources in CEE. Some of the features of the website include descriptions of the network of Country Water Partnerships (CWP) as well as regional program activities, news stories and events held by the GWP CEE Regional Secretariat and the CWP network.



The website provides links to other important global and regional information resources and holds an extensive collection of GWP regional and global publications. A tool for governments, civil society, researchers and the media, the website helps to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue on water issues and provides a wealth of information and guidance on IWRM.

Bulgaria and Greece cooperate in shared watersheds



CREDIT: GEORGI GERGOV

High dam of the Tukavros Lake in Greece on the Mesta (Nestos River) after the border with Bulgaria

FOUR MAIN RIVERS – THE MARITSA, STRUMA, MESTA AND ARDA, SERVE AS WATER LINKS BETWEEN TWO NEIGHBORING NATIONS – GREECE AND BULGARIA. ANCIENT LEGEND SAYS THAT THE MARITSA AND STRUMA WERE ONCE EVEN NAVIGABLE FOR LARGE DISTANCES UPSTREAM, WHILE THE DELTAS OF THE MESTA AND STRUMA WERE USED BY THE FLEETS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND OTHER MILITARY COMMANDERS.

However, in recent decades, the rivers have not been used for navigation because of a significant drop in the water level, caused by de-

creased water carrying capacity. Massive deforestation of river basins, climate change and intensive water use are the main reasons for the water shortage in rivers. Massive use and the support of road transport, which can move goods at low costs, has also contributed to the decline in water transport. As a consequence, rivers have gradually shifted to another form of existence – a source of energy and water for industrial and urban sewage systems, for irrigation and water supply or serving as wastewater receptacles from large industrial sites and urban sewerage systems.

Accelerated construction along the rivers and extensive water abstraction calls for the control of human activities which could cause irreversible damage to rivers, their environment and water ecosystems. These threads initiated cooperation in the protection of the water environment and safeguarding of major water sources from exploitation and pollution. These concerns are discussed in frequent conferences, seminars, workshops and discussions involving experts, managers, journalists and the general public all over the world. Numerous programs for research, operative collaboration, control and prevention have been developed. The most recent event in this respect was the seminar held in the town of Xanti, Greece, from May 29 till June 5, 2005 at the initiative of the Greek party. The seminar was attended by delegates from many European states, the UN ECE, UNESCO and representatives of its specialized programs – HELP and ISARM. In addition to representatives of governmental bodies and research institutes, the Bulgarian participants also included a representative of the NGO Global Water Partnership.

The Chief Organizer from the Greek side was Prof. J. Ganoulis from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The meeting was held on the premises of the University of Xanti under impressive organizational arrangements, comprising interesting and informative trips along the Mesta River in Greece to a dam near the border, in the area of the delta and a river gorge above the town of Xanti.

The participants spent a day and a half in the area of the town of Bansko to become familiar with the Bulgarian side of the river watershed. The visitors were taken around the automatic monitoring station on the Mesta in the vicinity of the "Sveta Varvara" spa. The station was installed with financial assistance from the

Annex 1.

ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE MESTA RIVER IN BULGARIA

1. Extensive sediment runoff
2. Advanced soil erosion in the river watershed
3. Absence of erosion preventive measures, including reinforcement of flood beds
4. Inadequate use of water resources
5. Household and industrial wastewater pollution
6. Insufficient number of treatment plants
7. Underdeveloped network for hydro-meteorological observation
8. Inadequate investigation of the surface, ground and Karst water resources
9. Slow economic development
10. Underdeveloped infrastructure, energy sector and irrigation
11. Measures for the protection of the population from flash floods
12. Unregulated extraction of sand and gravel materials for construction sector needs

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE MESTA RIVER IN GREECE

1. Extensive sediment influx in the lakes, generated from the area of Bulgaria
2. Influx in the lakes of polluted household and industrial wastewater from Bulgaria
3. Absence of information exchange required for dam management, including hydrological forecasts for floods
4. Advanced soil erosion in the river watershed
5. Absence of erosion-preventive measures, including reinforcement of river beds
6. Washing away and sinking of the river bottom after the lakes.
7. Initial degradation of the river delta
8. Underdeveloped monitoring network
9. Inadequate investigation of water and other natural resources in the region
10. Household and industrial wastewater pollution of the delta area
11. Insufficient number of treatment plants
12. Periodical eutrophication of the delta



CREDIT: R. MULLER/GWP CEE

Floods endanger the lives of humans and damage property in CEE

PHARE Program and continuously records the river features based on 13 indicators at the requirement of the Ministry of Environment and Water. In response to the great interest on the part of all the participants, organizers arranged a visit to the wastewater treatment plant in the village of Eleshnitsa, near a uranium mine,

which was closed down in 1996. Although the operators on duty provided extensive explanations and guarantees regarding the environmental safety of the water, many of the foreigners took water samples for laboratory analysis after the meeting.

The reigning atmosphere of professionalism, partnership and friendship greatly contributed to adequate identification of the major environmental problems, listed in Annex 1.

All those present at the meeting admitted that modern sustainable management of water or natural resources is not possible in the absence of appropriate data. This was the reason for assigning the highest priority to the issues related to the monitoring of hydro-meteorological, economic, social, demographic, seismic and technical problems. In this series of tasks

a leading place was assigned to new research on the solid load of river runoff, which might undermine most rapidly and directly the beneficial effect from the operation of the dams. High importance was also placed on the problems of wastewater treatment, karst phenomena and the need for erosion-preventive measures.

After long and extensive debates, the participants reached full consensus on a joint program for a comprehensive study of the Mesta River and its watershed, making utmost use of the experience of the other countries in the handling of cross-border bodies of water. The main objective of the program is the protection of water resources and natural wealth in the area coupled with achieving maximum effect from their multiple economic uses. It has been emphasized that this can only be possible through the application of integrated water management, based on ample, reliable, freely accessible and actual information gathering and exchange between the two countries.

The most difficult part of the work lays ahead – elaboration of the documentation and procurement of the required financial resources, which will allow us to proceed with this complex work in the framework of close bilateral co-operation. All of these efforts are aimed at improving the environmental situation in the region and providing conditions for profiting from the use of water and other natural resources to the benefit of the two neighboring nations.

*Prof. George Gergov
GWP-Bulgaria*

Focus on Floods

GWP CEE is studying historical floods from an integrated flood management viewpoint.

THE ASSOCIATED PROGRAM ON FLOOD MANAGEMENT (APFM) IS A JOINT INITIATIVE OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO) AND THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP (GWP).

Flood management is a broad concept that focuses on reducing flood hazards through a combination of policy, institutional, regulatory and physical measures. Therefore, APFM aims to combine integrated water resource management thinking into flood management practices and vice versa. In addition, it promotes the concept of Integrated Flood Management (IFM) as a new approach to flood management. APFM is globally coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) based in Geneva and financially supported by Japan and the Netherlands. WMO provides access to synthesized knowledge and best practices, capacity building, advice on management approaches, and cross-regional exchange experiences. Within the framework of APFM, GWP CEE began imple-

mentation of the WMO funded regional "Study of Historical Floods from an Integrated Flood Management Viewpoint" in 2004. The objectives of the study project include preparing an overview of recent floods in the CEE region with a special emphasis on flash floods, selecting a pilot river basin(s) for IFM testing and identify-

ing the most appropriate measures and tools for the integration of warnings in flash flood areas. A team of national experts studied flash floods in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Based on their findings, a regional synthesis report and project follow up are being prepared.



CREDIT: GWP CEE

Confluence of the Danube and the Morava Rivers is endangered by periodical floods

GWP CEE has a new Chair

ACCORDING TO THE GWP RULES OF REGIONAL COUNCIL ROTATION, THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF PROF. JANUSZ KINDLER EXPIRED IN APRIL 2005. Janusz chaired GWP CEE since the foundation of the CEE Regional Water Partnership. During that time, the GWP CEE Regional Secretariat moved from Budapest to Bratislava. In spite of this geographical inconvenience Janusz fulfilled his chair role with admirable commitment and talent from his position as a teacher at the Warsaw University of Technology. His long term tenure as professor at the Water Management Department and his professional contacts around the world are beneficial for the entire GWP. During his leadership, GWP CEE developed into a mature partnership which is now well known and recognized throughout the water world. The CEE chair has served both as a promoter, lobbyist and author of many GWP CEE

publications. Through this legacy, Janusz has paved the way for the future development of GWP CEE as a key player in the context of the IWRM, UN and the EU water policies. It is of course hard to imagine Janusz dramatically cutting back on his involvement in GWP family issues. With these words the GWP Secretariat and GWP CEE Regional Council would like to thank Janusz for his excellent and committed service to the partnership.

At the Council meeting in Krakow in April 2005, the Regional Council elected Liviu Nicolae Popescu from Romania as the new Chair. Janusz meanwhile will continue his involvement as a representative of the Regional Council. Liviu has also been involved in regional GWP activities from the very initial phase as representative of GWP Romania. His engagement in water issues is well-known mainly



Janusz Kindler gave over chairmanship during a small ceremony

CREDIT: GWP CEE

in the Danube region, where he has played a leading role in water monitoring network establishment and development. The GWP CEE regional Secretariat together with all of the GWP CEE family wishes Liviu positive energy sources and enthusiasm to continue the successful chairmanship began by Janusz, and with his occasional help which he kindly promised to provide. ■

New publication on CEE Tool Box

SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2001, THE TOOL BOX ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (THE IWRM TOOL BOX) HAS BEEN USED IN THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN REGION FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES TAILORED TO ADDRESS THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS IN WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

ToolBox

Integrated Water Resources Management

The training activities may also be applicable and beneficial to the Central Asia and Caucasus region. Despite their geographical distance these two regions share a similar past. Both regions consist of young democratic countries established after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of their centrally planned economies. And they share the influence of turbulent economic development complemented with old environmental debts. In 2003, representatives from GWP Central Asia

and Caucasus introduced Tool Box activities to the region, based on the experience in GWP CEE. In total, four training courses were organized during 2004 – 2005. The courses were prepared for a broad group of stakeholders in the water sector interested in gaining knowledge on integrated approaches to water resource management. Participants ranged from decision-makers to water researchers, environmental and water experts from the private sector, and water practitioners from NGOs. The courses provided an exclusive walk through broad aspects of IWRM and topics included water planning and water management; translation of water policy into legislation; integrating economics into water planning and policy; public participation, negotiation of conflicts, awareness raising. The courses were very well received, especially with respect to the efforts devoted to the preparation of the training texts, group exercises and supporting documentation. Based on experiences from the courses, CEE Tool Box Fo-

cal Point prepared the new publication which brings the most important papers from courses and website references for water experts and all those interested in IWRM.

The main sources of the training texts were taken from the websites of the IWRM Tool Box www.gwpforum.org and the Capacity Building Network (Cap-Net) www.cap-net.org. The effort to provide a comprehensive overview was devoted by water experts from the CEE region (Danka Thalmeinerova and Eleonora Bartkova) and the UK (Glynn Skerratt). This publication compiles papers and websites which, in the opinion of GWP CEE, are among the most relevant experiences and references on IWRM with the hope that it will be used by water experts and all those interested in promoting coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources. To get a free copy, please contact GWP CEE Regional Secretariat. ■

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