



PRESS RELEASE

60 years of International Water Protection along the Rhine – Commemorative Colloquium in the Electoral Palace in Mainz

Koblenz/Mainz, 29/30 June 2010

On Wednesday, 30 June 2010, more than 250 participants representing water management in the ICPR Member States Switzerland, France, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, and Germany, and in other states belonging to the Rhine catchment will celebrate 60 years of successful cross-border co-operation in the field of Rhine protection. During the commemorative colloquium in the Electoral Palace in Mainz, we will look back upon six decades of work, draw a balance and look into the future.

Upon a Dutch initiative, the first conference of the “International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution” was staged on 11 July, 1950 to address the problem of Rhine water pollution on a cross-border basis. Since then, representatives from France, Germany, Luxemburg, Switzerland and the Netherlands have been closely co-operating, addressing great challenges – like the Sandoz accident in November 1986 and the centennial floods in 1993 and 1995. The Action Programmes and their very successful restoration measures have proved what joint cross-border approaches may achieve. At the time being, the programme “Rhine 2020” and the Action Plan on Floods are under implementation. Targets set out at the time are today strongly supported by current EU legislation:

- To improve ecological continuity (up- and downstream migration), measures will now be carried out at the sluices of the Haringvliet and new fish passages will be constructed on the barrages of the Upper Rhine at Strasbourg and Gerstheim, as well as in many further water bodies; in addition, the formerly existing network of habitats typical for the Rhine (habitat patch connectivity) will gradually be improved by reactivating floodplains and more than 30 re-connected old river branches;
- Eventual flood damages in the lowlands of the Rhine and extreme flood peaks will be distinctly reduced by 2020, e.g. by creating new retention areas.
- On-going measures will further improve water quality; in addition, new substances such as residues of personal care products, pharmaceuticals and hormone active ingredients are increasingly being considered and strategies aimed at avoiding them are under preparation.

With a view to a coordinated approach in the entire Rhine watershed cooperation was extended to Austria, Liechtenstein and the Belgian region Wallonia in 2001 in order to jointly draft the management plan for the Rhine catchment required by the Water Framework Directive.

Upon the invitation of the German delegation, the commemorative colloquium will be followed by this year’s ICPR Plenary Assembly which will equally be staged in the Electoral Palace.

The **commemoration of 60 years of ICPR** is being staged **between 9.30 a.m. and 13.30 p.m. on 30 June 2010 in the great hall of the Electoral Palace**. The commemorative speeches of the President of the ICPR, Mr. Jacques Sicherman, the former President of the ICPR, Mr. Dietrich Ruchay and personal impressions of the Head of the Dutch Delegation at the time of the Sandoz accident, Mr. Lodewijk van Ulden, will review 60 years of water protection in the Rhine catchment and give an outlook on future challenges of European water protection. In panel discussions on the topics "Salmon 2020", "How clean is the Rhine?" and "Floods and Climate Change" present and former colleagues in the ICPR and representatives of protection and user groups will give their views from many different angles.

Further information

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Short description of the ICPR

As Rhine bordering countries, Switzerland, France, Germany and the Netherlands as well as Luxemburg and the European Community co-operate within the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR) on the basis of a treaty under international law. The President and the different ICPR fora are supported by the international staff of the permanent secretariat in Koblenz (Germany). Furthermore, the secretariat is supporting the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive (directive 2000/60/EC) and of the Flood Management Directive (directive 2007/60/EC). To this end, cross-border co-operation was extended to Austria, Liechtenstein and the Belgian region Wallonia. The working languages of the ICPR are German, French and Dutch. For detailed information on the ICPR please browse to the ICPR website: www.iksr.org.