

Draft Memo of the Rivers' Green Summer Academy session on transboundary rivers and inland navigation / regulation of rivers

arranged within the frame of the [Green Summer University "Crossing borders"](#)

in partnership of [Green European Foundation](#) , [Heinrich Boell Foundation \(Warsaw office\)](#) and [Coalition Save Rivers](#)

12-15 June 2018, Pensjonat "Uroczysko Zaborek", Janów Podlaski (Poland)

The session took place on 14 July 2018 and was arranged in coordination between [Polish Ecological Club in Gliwice](#) (PKE, Poland), [Coalition Save Rivers](#) (KRR, Poland) and [Coalition Clean Baltic](#) (CCB, Sweden) with the support of the NCM/EU LIFE -supported Project "Healthy River – Healthy Me – Healthy Sea: Joint actions for common challenges" (NCM Project # 18137).

The session was attended by ca.20 participants, representing Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Swedish NGOs and other institutions (e.g. universities). See list of participants' contacts attached. Agenda of the event consisted of introductory presentations and discussions, as follows:

9:00 - 11:00 Rivers - exchange of knowledge part I. Introductions

Led by: Mikhail Durkin (SE)

- main presentations: [Mikhail Durkin](#) (SE) & [Volha Kaskevitch](#) (BY)
- introductions of relevant national/transboundary river issues: Heorhiy Veremiychyk (UA), Oleksandr Husiev (UA), Alesia Basharymava (BY), Ewa Leś (PL) & Sascha Maier (DE)
- roundtable introductions of participants and their expectations

Break

11:30 - 13:00 Rivers - exchange of knowledge part II

Led by: Maria Staniszewska (PL)

- [Heorhiy Veremiychyk / Oleksandr Husiev \(UA\)](#): River navigation and climate change
- [Izabela Zygmunt](#) (PL): Lobbying in EU institutions
- [Petro Hrytsyshyn](#) (UA) Environmental state of Western Bug River Basin in Ukraine

Lunch

14:00 - 16:00 Working Groups E30 and E40

- E30/E40 discussions led by: [Ewa Leś](#), [Sascha Maier](#), [Maria Staniszewska](#), Mikhail Durkin
- Thought starter: GEF project (Mikhail Durkin) & Rhine–Main–Danube Canal (Sascha Maier)

Break

16:30 - 18:00 Rivers – plan of action

Led by: Izabela Zygmunt & Ewa Leś

- Mikhail Durkin (CCB, Sweden) presented CCB's work on river-related issues within the Baltic Sea basin.
- Volha Kaskevitch (Bagna, Belarus) presented the issue of EU waterway corridors and wetlands and exemplified it for the E40 project and respective [#stope40](#) campaign.
- Heorhiy Veremiychyk, Oleksandr Husiev, Alesia Basharymava, Ewa Leś & Sascha Maier briefed about their national river issues of relevance for the discussion.
- Heorhiy Veremiychyk (National Ecological Centre of Ukraine) presented public analysis of hydropower energy development in Ukraine in the context of EU integration with a focus on climate change impact on rivers.
- Izabela Zygmunt (Bankwatch, Poland) presented ways of defending rivers through lobbying EU institutions and funds
- Petro Hrytsyshyn presented Environmental state of Western Bug River Basin in Ukraine
- Ewa Les & Sasha Meier presented E30 project and main issues related to inland navigation on Odra.

Participants discussed:

- What tools can be mobilised through the EU Convention to stop waterway development proposals or mitigate their effects?
- How can we mobilise the EU legislation in order to support the conservation of the Ramsar sites along the planned waterways (any relevance to the non-EU countries)?
- What alternative ways of exploitation might be proposed to prove wise use of wetlands with the exclusion of waterway for freight transport?
- How could the ecosystem services of wetlands justify the lack of necessity of waterways construction?

Participants considered:

- to set up a joint mailing list to enable smooth communication – to be maintained jointly by KRR and CCB. CCB has offered to host meeting documents and other relevant information of a “wider river coalition” of NGOs on its [events’ webportal](#)
- to decide on the next meeting of a “wider river coalition” preliminary in November through a joint calendar of events to be established, also to coordinate potential participation in each others’ events.
- to focus main activities with regards to regulation of rivers and inland navigation projects nationally and internationally on
 - (1) use of legal instruments (EU, UNECE, etc) to address violations of environmental legislation on protection of rivers and
 - (2) targeting general public with explaining misconception on development of river regulation and inland navigation projects
- to develop a public awareness materials (brochures, leaflets, etc.) revealing main “myths” related to regulation of rivers / inland navigation projects”, based on the following preliminary drafted ones:

Outcome of brainstorming on “myths” on regulation of rivers / inland navigation:

1. Regulation of rivers will bring prosperity and increase welfare, by creating new jobs and opportunities for development
2. Damming rivers will prevent floods & droughts / reservoirs will help for irrigation and storage of water for agriculture
3. Public (taxpayers’) money will be spent wisely
4. Inland navigation will help to cope climate change by decreasing CO₂ emissions from transport
5. Inland navigation is the most ecological mode of transport
6. There is economic demand for inland navigation
7. Public will benefit from inland navigation development
8. Regulation of rivers will save riparian forests and other areas that are drying-out
9. Missed business opportunities, if E40 and E30 are not being developed (other countries will use these opportunities)
10. There is and there will be enough water in our rivers to make them navigable
11. Rivers are there to be used and developed – those are our common resources, underused
12. There will not be any impact on river streams as a whole and nearby natural amenities, as e.g. wetlands
13. Freight river transportation is not in contradiction with recreational use (e.g. kayaking)
14. What works on Rhine will work everywhere
15. “Others are blocking our development” – if need be we will build a side-channel
16. Hydropower is a renewable and green energy
17. Rivers will become cleaner and better after being canalized and their sediments are being dredged
18. Railways are not alternative / waterways are cheaper for freight
19. Water supply across a year / seasons needs to stabilised
20. Water flow / velocity does not matter
21. Nature will adapt: birds will choose other corridors, wetlands will be re-established, etc.

List of participants (to be updated)

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