



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HYDROGEOLOGISTS

Report from the Vice President for Europe (EU) – Year 2011

The preparation process for the 6th **World Water Forum (WWF)** held in Marseille in March 12-16th 2012 was fully active in 2011, with several meetings that took place at different levels all around France and abroad.

My main involvement for **IAH** concerning the preparation of the **WWF** consisted in:

- 1- Pushing forward “**groundwater**” as **one of the major themes** that needed to be addressed at the Forum, particularly in view of the fact it is a natural resource which must be (1) **protected** and **preserved** and (2) **managed along with surface water** in the framework of sustainable land and **economic development** schemes.
- 2- Conveying the idea that, due to its inertia and underground characteristics, **groundwater** will play a “**key role**” and represent a “**key asset**” in the efforts to **adapt to climate change**,
- 3- Enhancing the visibility of **IAH** at the 6th **WWF**, notably through ensuring collaborative works with the **UNESCO** teams.

Apart from the **WWF**, my main contributions for **IAH** in 2011 aimed at building on the work performed in the previous years, namely:

- Maintaining and consolidating the links between **IAH** and the **EU Commission**, particularly with the **Environment Directorate-General** and the **Directorate-General for Research and Innovation**,
- Consolidating the links between **IAH** and international organisations (ie; **UNESCO, IOW, INBO, ...**),
- Bringing the EU geological surveys closer to **IAH**,
- Contributing to increasing **IAH memberships** focusing on the young scientist and engineer communities.

1 – Maintaining and consolidating the links between IAH and the EU Commission

Remaining close to the **EU Commission** and consolidating the existing links that we have with its institutions and structures in charge of water aspects is a long term effort that **IAH** must keep on pursuing in order to (1) enhance hydrogeology and groundwater sciences in Europe and (2) contribute to proper management of the water resources both within Europe and abroad. This also brings direct and indirect benefits to the Association and to many of its EU members.

As already stated in my preceding reports, most water related activities in Europe (including research aspects – 7PCRD etc.) are governed by the European **Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC – WFD** - and the various directives and daughter directives that it federates, among which, the **Groundwater Daughter Directive 2006/118/EC – GWD**.

To ensure efficiency in the implementation of the **WFD** and **associated directives**, the EU Commission along with the Member States have decided that a “**Common Implementation Strategy – CIS**” was necessary at the scale of Europe; indeed, all Member States needed to (1) have a common understanding and approach to the **WFD** and (2) proceed together in a concerted and clarified manner in order to meet the requirements of the EU water legislation (notably reaching a good water status in 2015 in the EU water resources).

This led to the creation of several working groups, among which **Working Group C – WG C** – for groundwater which particularly addresses specific issues in the implementation process of the **GWD**, producing common agreed on guidebooks and allowing for experience sharing. Most of the guidebooks produced by **WG C** can be found on the Europa website:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/groundwater/scienc_tec/cis/index_en.htm).

Collaboration with EU Member representatives and experts from all around Europe within these working groups is a chance for **IAH** as it contributes to:

- 1- Making the association more visible on the European scene,
- 2- Alerting EU authorities on the importance of groundwater and the need to include it in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP - one of the WFD mandatory key documents that has to be elaborated for each catchment in Europe),
- 3- Bridging the gap between science and policy with regard to water resources management,
- 4- Providing useful technical and scientific advices to help frame-working the thinking processes and ensuring that the resulting documents are in line with the concept of sustainable management and protection of water resources, and more specifically groundwater.

In 2011, I kept close contact with the members of the **WG C** and participated in the work achieved on climate change and on the revision of annexe I and II of the **GWD**.

In addition, I contributed to a **CIS** survey to establish a list of research topics that EU should fund to remove some scientific locks that affect the implementation of the **WFD** (an **SPI-Science Policy Interface ad hoc CIS** activity).

2 - Consolidating the links between IAH and international organisations (ie; UNESCO, IOW, INBO, ...)

Contacts with **UNESCO**, **IOW** (International Office for Water) and **INBO** (International Network for Basin Organisations) were further consolidated during 2011 to increase collaboration through common actions in Europe and abroad, notably on Trans-boundary integrated water management.

Many of these actions targeted the 6th **WWF**.

3 - Bringing the geological surveys closer to IAH:

Many European Geological surveys are involved in water resources management, and particularly groundwater resources management. They often carry out applied research and practical studies in the field of water resources, and some even play a key role in the implementation of the **WFD** and **GWD**. As such they represent natural and strategic partners for **IAH**.

In 2011, I took advantage of each opportunity I had to meet hydrogeologists from the European surveys to attempt bringing **IAH** closer to the Surveys, to call for a greater representation of the surveys in the Association and to tune in joint messages to address to deciding bodies (European Union in particular).

4 - Increasing IAH memberships

It is important for **IAH** to keep on growing and become a scientific heavy weight in the field of groundwater management and protection. To achieve this, in addition to senior expertise and wisdom, we also need a strong panel of young and dynamic members from the scientific and engineering communities, both from the public

(universities, research institutes, administration, local communities, ...) and private (consulting companies, water companies, ...) sectors.

The search for new members remained a priority for me in 2011.

5 – Miscellaneous

Apart from the tasks and actions described above, I also participated to the **GSSA/Groundwater Division - IAH** Pretoria conference, as well as to the annual Council meeting, the annual Chapters meeting and General Assembly held on September 2011 during the Pretoria event.

Cooperation actions between **EU IAH national chapters** were also encouraged whenever possible – ex. participation of the French and Portuguese IAH Chapters in the 2011 IAH Spanish Chapter Congress in Zaragoza - Spain (Congreso Ibérico sobre las Aguas Subterráneas: Desafíos de la Gestión para el Siglo XXI).

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