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EU Conference Report

“Linking research to policy in the water sector:
Connecting people for a sustainable coastal
water management in Europe”

How to achieve sustainable water ecosystems management
connecting research, people and policy makers in Europe (AWARE)

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PP Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)
RE Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)
CO Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

AA	Andris Andrušaitis, invited speaker
Aud	A member of the Conference audience
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
Cit	One of the members of the AWARE citizens' panel
CS	Carlo Sessa, coordinator of the AWARE project
DB	Denis Bailly
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG ENV	Directorate-General for the Environment
EC	European Commission
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
FG	Fanny Gleize, facilitator of the meeting
ISIS	Istituto di Studi per l'Integrazione dei Sistemi
JRC	EC Joint Research Centre
KF	Karen Fabbri, invited speaker
MZ	Marcella Zappaterra, invited speaker
PC	Paolo Casalino, invited speaker
PQ	Philippe Quevauviller, invited speaker
SB	Stephane Buffetaut, invited speaker
Sci	One of the AWARE scientist/partners
SPI	Science-Policy Interface
UWWTD	Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
WFD	Water Framework Directive
YM	Yves Mathieu, facilitator of the meeting

1. RATIONALE

The Conference “Linking research to policy in the water sector: Connecting people for a sustainable coastal water management in Europe” took place in the context of the AWARE project, funded by the 7th Research Framework Programme (www.aware-eu.net). This project tested an innovative participatory method whereby a transnational panel of final water users – 30 citizens randomly selected from three coastal areas of Europe (Gulf of Riga in Latvia and Estonia, Southern North Sea in France and Belgium, and the Goro lagoon in Italy) – has been engaged in a number of workshops with scientific experts and policy-makers to assess the best scientific knowledge available, the local water management practices and the EU water policy framework, and formulate their recommendations. The ultimate goal of the AWARE project is to demonstrate a new method of connecting research, policy-maker and civic communities in the coastal zones of Europe, in order to achieve sustainable water ecosystems management. Properly managed, European coastal waters can continue to be a source of wealth and pleasure for populations. We need sustainable water management for the increasing coastal population, but also to prepare for the manifold consequences of climate change in the 21st century.

The various aims of the Conference were:

- To present the final result of the AWARE project: the citizens’ assessment on coastal water management issues and on the participatory method experimented along the project.
- To confront the scientific and policy-making expertise with the everyday knowledge of the final water users: lay citizens from different cultures and coastal settings of Europe.
- To let the most relevant policy-makers and stakeholders (represented by their Brussels offices) to become aware of the AWARE citizens’ panel conclusions, and to add their own recommendations on the actions needed to link research to policy in the water field.
- To address the call for more public participation in the context of EU policies (e.g. WFD).

Through the discussion of the outcomes of the AWARE project, the focus of the conference was on how to improve the connectivity amongst science and policy in the water sector, in particular by promoting the active involvement of the civil society and raising citizens’ awareness about the coastal water problems.

EVENT DETAILS

The Conference “Linking research to policy in the water sector: Connecting people for a sustainable coastal water management” was held on June 9, 2011 at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels (Meeting Room: JDE62–Civitas; Van Maerlant Street, 2 - 1040 Brussels). Simultaneous interpretation was provided into French, Italian and English.

2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Surname	Name	Country	Organisation
1	Andrusaitis	Andris	Finland	BONUS EEIG
2	Arnouts-Degrad	Séverine	France	Ville de Dunkerque
3	Baanante	Ignacio	Belgium	Spanish Ministry of science and innovation
4	Bailly	Denis	France	Université de Bretagne Occidentale
5	BANESCU	Anne-Marie	Belgium	European Commission
6	Barbieri	Andrea	Belgium	Societè publique de gestione de l'eau
7	Becker	Gert	The Netherland	VU University Amsterdam - IVM
8	Belluscio	Maria Teresa	Italy	ISIS-consultant
9	Bernardi	Arianna	Italy	Citizen
10	Berzins	Arnis	Latvia	Citizen
11	Billen	Gilles	France	University Pierre & Marie Curie
12	Brouwer	Christian	France	Fédération des Chasseurs du Nord
13	Bryhn	Andreas	Sweden	University of Uppsala
14	Buffetaut	Stephane	Belgium	EECS
15	Camisotti	Fabio	Italy	Citizen
16	Casalino	Paolo	Belgium	Region Puglia
17	Caune	Aija	Latvia	Citizen
18	Comardicea	Irina	Germany	Adelphi
19	Conventi	Andrea	Italy	Municipality of Goro
20	Copin	Nicolas	Belgium	Citizen
21	Coroner	Florence	France	IFREMER
22	Cox	David	Belgique	Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO)
23	D'Hoop	Mercedez	France	Citizen
24	D'Hoop	Yves	France	Citizen
25	De Ridder	Veronique	Belgium	Citizen
26	Fabbri	Karen	Belgium	DG ENV - EC
27	Fiel	Mikhaella	France	Citizen
28	Garnier	Josette	France	University Pierre & Marie Curie
29	Giordani	Gianmarco	Italy	University of Parma - Italy
30	Gleize	Fanny	France	Missions Publiques
31	Gori	Gilda	Italy	Citizen
32	Gori	Giovanna	Italy	Citizen
33	Hanken	Emmanuel	Belgium	Citizen
34	HECQ	Walter	Belgium	Université Libre de Bruxelles
35	Hincs	Aivars	Latvia	Citizen
36	Izzo	Marianna	Belgium	Regione Campania
37	Jekabsone	Agnese	Latvia	Citizen
38	Kerry	Thomas	UK	Environmental Sustainability Knowledge Transfer Network
39	KOPS	KARIN	Estonia	Citizen
40	Kyramarios	Michael	Belgique	SPF
41	Lancelot - Van Beveren	Christiane	Belgium	Université Libre de Bruxelles
42	Ledaguenel	Alain	France	Citizen
43	Lefèbvre	Ann	Belgium	Citizen
44	Liquete	Camino	Italy	JRC
45	Ljungquist	Nina	Sweden	Coalition Clean Baltic/Baltic Green Belt
46	Lonati	Arianna	Italy	Citizen

47	Lovo	Stefano	Italy	Provincia di Ferrara
48	Luè	Alessandro	Italy	POLIEDRA
49	Mackenzie	Mike	Belgium	EC DG AGRI
50	Magri	Paola	Italy	Provincia di Ferrara
51	Manfredini	Claudio	Italy	Citizen
52	Masselot	Jean-Francois	France	Citizen
53	Mathieu	Yves	Belgium	Missions Publiques
54	Mees	Jan	Belgium	Flanders Marine Institute (Belgium)
55	Midgley	Stephen	Germany	Berlin Centre of Competence for Water
56	Mize	Anda	Latvia	Citizen
57	Mocenni	Chiara	Italy	University of Siena
58	Montassine	Gérard	France	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes
59	More	Isabelle	Belgium	Citizen
60	Moya Alvarez	Edgar	Belgium	Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation
61	Passy	Paul	France	University Pierre & Marie Curie
62	Petjukevich	Aleksandrs	Latvia	Citizen
63	Piegava	Gina	Latvia	Citizen
64	Pierrot	Antoine	France	Lyonnaise-des-eaux
65	Pohoryles	ronald	Austria	ICCR
66	Poletti	Roberto	Italy	Citizen
67	Quevauviller	Philippe	Belgium	EC DG Research & Innovation
68	Rakedjian	Bruno	France	MEEDDAT
69	Ramelot	Catherine	Belgique	NITRAWAL
70	Reinholde	Ieva	Latvia	Citizen
71	Reisner	Rene	Estonia	Estonian Ministry of the Environment
72	Riousset	Pauline	France	Université Pierre et Marie Curie
73	ROUSSEAU	Véronique	Belgium	Université Libre de Bruxelles
74	Rousselot	Olivier	France	Syndicat Interdépartemental de l'Assainissement de l'Agglomération Parisienne
75	Sarv	Kaur	Estonia	Citizen
76	Scarpa	Angelo	Italy	Citizen
77	Schmidt	Michael	austria	ICCR
78	Serra-Llobet	Anna	Belgium	European Commission
79	Sessa	Carlo	Italy	ISIS
80	Six	Pierre	France	Chambre d'agriculture Nord-Pas-de-Calais
81	Sparacino	Emiliano	Italy	University of Siena
82	Staffan	Nilsson	Belgium	EECS
83	Stålnacke	Per	Norway	Bioforsk
84	Terrier	Isabelle	Belgium	Ministère de l'Agriculture, France
85	Tornatore	Francesco	Italy	Autorità di Bacino del Fiume Po
86	Vadrot	Alice	Austria	ICCR
87	Veidemane	Kristina	Latvia	Baltic Environmental Forum-Latvia
88	Veratelli	Maria Cristina	Italy	Citizen
89	Vitina	Dace	Latvia	Baltic Environmental Forum-Latvia
90	Viviani	Diego	Italy	Citizen
91	Wouters	Benjamin	Belgium	Citizen
92	Zappaterra	Marcella	Italy	Provincia di Ferrara

3. AGENDA

The following Conference programme was distributed to the participants before the event (by email) and during the event (together with the AWARE documentation).

09:00 – 09:30	Registration of the participants.
09:30 – 10:15	<p>Welcome and introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Staffan Nilsson, EESC President. <i>Opening.</i> • Carlo Sessa, ISIS, AWARE project coordinator. <i>Introduction to the AWARE project approach and framework.</i>
10:15 – 10:45	<p>Enhancing connectivity between research and policy for a sustainable coastal water management: The citizens' perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens' declaration and recommendations.
10:45 – 11:15	<p>Enhancing connectivity between research and policy for a sustainable coastal water management: The scientists' perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-table with the experts involved in the AWARE pilot experiments of knowledge brokerage
11:15 – 12:00	<p>Feedback from the institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC DG ENV representative, Karen Fabbri • EC DG AGRI representative, Mike Mackenzie
12:00 – 13:00	Open debate with participating stakeholders and the public.
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Buffet lunch</i>
14:00 – 14:30	Intervention of the SPICOSA project scientific coordinator, Denis Bailly
14:30 – 16:30	<p>Round-table: <i>Enhancing connections for an improved coastal waters management.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives from the Po Delta area: President of the Ferrara Province, Ms. Marcella Zappaterra • Perspectives from the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea: BONUS science programme manager, Dr. Andris Andrušaitis • Perspectives from the European Economic and Social Committee, Mr. Stephane Buffetaut, EESC Member and Rapporteur on the EESC Opinion NAT/429: Sustainable development of coastal regions • Perspectives from the Committee of Regions, Mr. Paolo Casalino, Apulia Region, Relations with European Union Institutions
16.30 – 16.45	Intervention of the EC DG Research & Innovation representative: Mr. Philippe Quevauviller
16.45 – 17.00	Intervention of the President of the TEN Section (Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society) of the EESC: Mr. Stephane Buffetaut
17.00 – 17.15	<p>Report back of the main conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlo Sessa, AWARE Coordinator

4. MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE

09:00-09:30	Registration of the participants. Delivery of badges and AWARE documentation (including the citizens' Declaration).
09:30-10:15	<p>Welcome and introduction</p> <p>YM: Short presentation of the AWARE participatory process. Presentation of the agenda of the morning session and the translation services. Introduction of the AWARE participants and speakers of the morning session.</p> <p>FG: Presentation of the agenda the afternoon session, in particular the subject, goal and speakers of the round-table.</p> <p>YM: Introduction of the first speaker, Staffan Nilsson, and the important role of EESC supporting participatory projects and ideas like AWARE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffan Nilsson, EESC President: Opening of the Conference. <p>He is pleased to collaborate with the AWARE project. EESC is an advisory body of the EU formed by 2 committees: the Committee of the Regions (engaging politicians from different regions) and the EESC (engaging civil society organizations). The AWARE project concerns all of them. It establishes a bridge between science and the civil society. It has a very good key concept: improving water management combining it with people. He provides an example of a project in the Baltic Sea (which was highly polluted) where there were activities to train farmers to be more respectful with the environment. AWARE is a good combination of science and society focusing in 3 case study areas but combining local and EU scales. The EESC is willing to receive an input from the AWARE project. The Committee has also called for special focus on coastal regions, as reflected in a document published in 2010 by Mr Stéphane Buffetaut and colleagues (he will speak in the round-table of the afternoon).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlo Sessa, ISIS, AWARE coordinator: Introduction to the AWARE project approach and framework. <p>The AWARE project ("How to achieve sustainable water ecosystems management connecting research, people and policy makers in Europe") has the meaning of connecting people for a better water management. It achieved a full interaction between scientists, specialists and citizens.</p> <p>The AWARE goal is to demonstrate a method to enhance connectivity by engaging small groups of random (and carefully) selected citizens in a knowledge brokerage process with scientists and decision-makers. The "random" selection assured that there was enough diversity in the group. This method will be disseminated and promoted in other areas of Europe or, even, in other sustainability domains.</p> <p>In this EU funded project, citizens are considered as participants in</p>

	<p>AWARE from the beginning, not only as clients or end-users of a research and policy process owned by others. AWARE is indeed a knowledge brokerage process to ask the citizens to make a <u>critical review</u> of the science and technology that has been developed in coastal water management. After AWARE, between research and end-users there must be not only science, policy and the market development of innovations eventually produced as final outcome of the research, but also a feedback step of critical review from the citizens. AWARE is also a new experience of integrated adaptive water management.</p> <p>The AWARE process included: a 1st European workshop at the EU level; 3 local workshops and conferences; a 2nd European workshop at the EU level, and finally this European Conference.</p> <p>This Conference try to address two main questions: (1) Is the AWARE knowledge brokerage approach useful and needed to enhance connectivity among the actors and help to achieve sustainable Coastal water management? (2) How to promote and replicate the method?</p> <p>During this Conference we will hear: the citizens' Declaration, the scientists' perspective, the feedback from EU institutions, and the perspective from the local and international authorities involved.</p> <p>YM & FG: They thank the stakeholders participating in the process and the audience present in the room. They ask for the background of the people in the room (there is a relatively good balance). They explain some facilitation techniques, e.g. the post-its to write ideas and proposals.</p> <p>Individual presentation of the AWARE citizens.</p> <p>There is an "unintended" good consequence of the AWARE project: two of the members of the citizens panel became the new major and vice major of Goro (the Italian case study)!</p> <p>YM & FG explain how the citizens built their Declaration throughout the local and European workshops. They received information and training from a diversity of speakers and then included their personal reflection.</p>
10:15-10:45	<p>Enhancing connectivity between research and policy for a sustainable coastal water management: The citizens' perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cit (Claudio Manferdini, Emmanuel Hankenne, Arianna Bernardi, Anda Mize, Mikhaella Fiel and Karin Kops): Presentation of the AWARE Citizens' Declaration and recommendations. <p>The main ideas from the citizens' Declaration are read and explained (see Annex 1 of this report):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The objective and focus, the relevance of eutrophication and other pollutants in the sea, the relevance of the connectivity between actors to understand such a complex issue. - Management and policy. They focus on the WFD objective. They miss a clear definition and scale of good ecological status. Countries evaluate it differently (e.g. Dauvane). They ask a common framework of understanding. They also miss functioning indicators of ecosystem and socio-economic activities (e.g. agriculture). There is a lack of room for citizens within the

	<p>implementation of the WFD, they are legitimate actors without opportunity to discuss. They are afraid that the objective WFD will not be attained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some recommendations are: improving the consistency, promoting independent scientific analyses, mapping approach, more consistency between EU policy (e.g. WFD, CAP and MSFD), more cooperation, more information provided by DG ENV to build bridges between policies. - Coastal waters are degraded by humans; it is time for action not for words; no single solutions are universal, we must consider all important aspects (environmental, economic and social) in each case study so that solutions can be customised by region. There are lots of examples from the 3 AWARE study areas. Waiting is always less effective and more expensive than acting today. - How to improve connectivity? They have experienced the gaps between people and between countries. "People" include: stakeholders, citizens, public managers, scientists. Citizens usually do not have access to the information, maybe due to the lack of interest or maybe to the excess of technicality. They need clear information, feedback from research and stakeholders. - Some recommendations are: create and support "scientific ambassadors" to translate and interpret critical information, public hearings, informal meetings at local level, description of activities. Transboundary issues must be improved since countries follow different criteria. - Information must be provided to all involved actors. Eutrophication is a large problem involving everyone in the whole river basin. Specific information and targets for scientists, policy-makers, stakeholders and children must be provided. Focus on education. Policy-makers should listen more to citizens and scientists. - Citizens are ready to play an active role in the solution and deal with complex issues. Eutrophication is just one of the issues to start with. We need a holistic approach to deal with the problem. Citizens are kept far from the policy making process even if it influence their daily life. They are actors also as consumers. They ask for cross consistency among policy. Only informed citizens are able to say what they want to do and why. Before AWARE they ignored many of these issues, but now they can act as enlighten consumers and, even more, they are willing to act and find a solution to the problem (empowered consumers).
10.45-11.15	<p>Enhancing connectivity between research and policy for a sustainable coastal water management: The scientists' perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-table with some scientists involved in the AWARE pilot experiments of knowledge brokerage <p>Chiara Mocenni, University of Siena</p> <p>Before starting AWARE she was a bit afraid of participating in a non-scientists process. However, now she has learnt a lot and enjoyed it because she is stimulated by the interest of the citizens, it reinforced her work and it made her improve her knowledge on general environmental issues. She found a lot of connections with her everyday work. The correct management of environmental systems</p>

must be based on a network of sustainability, complex and evolving, that may include all the actors at different levels of aggregation. The scientific contribution is not only modelling but also the analysis of this network of interactions. Participatory processes are a good method, but the way they are held and facilitated is very important, as it is reflected in the role of the “ambassadors” in the Declaration. In the Declaration, citizens mention the control of eutrophication, consistency of data, adaptation of scales, integration of policies, bridging disciplines, improve communication, shorten the gaps, facilitate the scientific information, and responsibility. These citizens are more scientists now! and scientists are more citizens connected to the real world! We started building a common language.

Gianmarco Giordani, University of Parma

He has been working in the biogeochemistry of Sacca di Goro for a very long time, since this place is the focus of a lot of projects since the 90s. however, scientists were always acting as “aliens” to the system, without contact with people. Fortunately, the last projects have been more participative also including socio-economic factors. But only in AWARE he has experienced a lot of benefits, amongst which that his work has become useful not only for academia but also for citizens. The relevance of environmental research is great; we should make public and tangible our results.

Christiane Lancelot, Université Libre de Bruxelles

She feels also as a citizen. It has been a very interesting personal experience. She could communicate complex matters to lay people and understand the large gap that existed between citizens and scientists (which we have somehow shortened). This experience has changed the way she teaches and the way she places the research activities within a socio-economic framework. However, scientists need excellence to improve the knowledge to support good decisions. She feels still far from policy-making.

Josette Garnier, University Pierre & Marie Curie

It has been an enriching personal experience. From her point of view, citizens were very dynamic and open to learn, they were able to reflect very quickly about complex water management issues, and they were able to make links between very different aspects. She had been working for 20 years with policy-makers but it was the first time she worked with citizens. This process improved her collaboration with stakeholders and society, who are a new input for the scientific models and discussion. In order to be generalised and spread the AWARE approach, the recommendations are a very good starting point (e.g. education, control...). However, it will be a tough task with the present economical situation (there are funding cuts, lack of means...).

Andreas C. Bryhn, University of Uppsala

He agrees very much with the previous statements. He had a regular interaction with lay people before AWARE, but in this case the citizens were one step ahead toward experts now. He got some very good ideas on how to continue his research (e.g. linking eutrophication

	<p>with other environmental issues such as inorganic pollutants). Scientists need to open their minds to other problems and make connections between them. The question is if we can go further with this kind of initiatives and reach decision making. Other issues can be treated with similar participatory process.</p> <p>Per Stålnacke, Bioforsk</p> <p>He works in a research institute where he already had the opportunity of dealing with policy-makers and stakeholders. The new interaction he had with the AWARE citizens led him to the following conclusions: (1) Citizens are clever, they understand complex issues quickly. (2) Citizens rely in what they see personally, mainly on the coast and on the media, which can be biased. In AWARE they realised that invisible things can be more important. (3) Citizens and stakeholders input in science is very important (e.g. for scenarios and model inputs). (4) The idea and role of the scientific ambassadors is great, but the problem is that this kind of task is not recognised in the scientific career (which is only based on publications). It seems that scientists are more trustful for citizens than media and policy-makers.</p>
	<p>Reaction from the public. Questions.</p> <p>Aud (Walter Hecq): Did AWARE involved NGOs? Is there representation of environmental scientists versus socio-economic scientists? How can you share and manage uncertainties about water quality when you communicate with citizens?</p> <p>DB: Has the concept of integrated coastal zone management been discussed? The citizens talk about complexity, also referring to socio-economics and politics? Can we define a better way to solve the problem of integrated coastal zone management?</p> <p>Aud (Andrea Barbieri): The WFD has a very broad view. It includes the recuperation of hydric costs, so industrial and agricultural sectors should collaborate following the "pollutant pays" principle. There have been public consultations related to the WFD (at least in Belgium), in particular before approving the "river basin management plans" that include economical and financial impacts.</p> <p>Answers from Per: One NGO (BEF) was included in the project as partner, and played an active role into organizing the local workshop and conference in the Riga case. ONGs play a media role in spreading information. I agree that we need to fully connect water and social scientists, something still not done in the AWARE pilot experiment, which involved mainly natural science experts focusing on coastal water quality and eutrophication issues. Scientific data should include social and economic aspects. As it concern the uncertainties, we have shown to the citizens the range of uncertainties existing about the present and future state of coastal waters, about causation chains and dynamics, and this helped to open the mind of the citizens that were more able to understand the complexity of the topic.</p> <p>CS: The economic analysis is indeed very important, but AWARE did not tackle it as the main focus. A lot of scientific and regulatory issues were treated in AWARE, but integrated coastal zone</p>

	<p>management was not one of them. NGOs are a key component of the AWARE project (e.g. BEF-Latvia). Social science is included in the AWARE evaluation, an intrinsic part of the project. The interaction with stakeholders within AWARE was more traditional (passive) than interaction with scientists.</p>
<p>11:15-12:00 12:00-13:00</p>	<p>Feedback from European institutions AND Open debate with participating stakeholders and the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Mackenzie, EC DG AGRI representative <p>He works in the Development Policy unit supporting the development of CAP, namely in the 3rd pillar called rural development very much linked with the environment. The CAP has direct impacts in water quality and quantity, so it can be an instrument to help minimise the impacts of agriculture.</p> <p>Initial reaction to Declaration: the concept of water quality and organic farming is very difficult to discuss. It is complex and expensive, and it is not feasible everywhere.</p> <p>Positive facts of the Declaration: Establishing links between stakeholders (placing people in the same room, e.g. farmers, fishermen...) is indeed crucial.</p> <p>Interesting things in the Declaration: Citizens claim that they should be treated at the same level as scientists. What it really means? How can it work?</p> <p>YM: How is the EC reacting to the debate of organic/alternative farming?</p> <p>The situation nowadays is much better than it was a few years ago. Productivity is no longer the only priority in the CAP (also for subsidies), sustainability and care for the environment is more and more present. Example: thanks to the rural development policy farmers can get loans to cover the costs of transition and implementation of organic farming. There are lots of practises that farmers can apply, including monetary helps to reduce pollution. It can be helpful (integrated with the UWWTD) in Latvia, one of the AWARE case studies.</p> <p>YM: How does DG AGRI deal with the WFD and water quality issues?</p> <p>There are some investments, formal links, and ongoing discussions. Sanctions to farmers through direct income support can be implemented. But the discussion on if the WFD should be fully included (integrated and supported) in the CAP is still open.</p> <p>YM: Could you apply some of the inputs from this Declaration in your work?</p> <p>He must still analyse the details. An interesting point is how the consultative approach worked. It seems different and it can be worthy to be analysed by DG AGRI.</p> <p>Cit (Claudio Manfredini): We must be included and informed because, in this way, we can decide to spend more to support bio-agriculture for example. Bio conversion is possible. Informed citizens can decide what they want to do and what they want to fund (in terms of research). CAP funded some rural schools that should be promoted and used to spread this word, to transmit good practises.</p>

Cit (Roberto Poletti): New education initiatives should be pushed and supported by the EC. There is a good programme to get people visiting farms, to let farmers connect with the public. Educational programmes for farmers are not fully applied; they need to be adapted, also in the technological field. We should also bridge the gap between research and farming.

- **Karen Fabbri, EC DG ENV representative**

She feels herself fully represented in AWARE: as part of the decision making system (DG ENV), as a former scientist of integrated coastal zone management, and as a citizen from Ferrara (the Italian case study). She works in the unit Chief Scientist and Innovation, dealing with the SPI. She dealt with EU legislation related to eutrophication, WFD, flooding, coastal zone management, environmental impact assessment, Agenda 21, etc. Participatory processes are part of these policies and should be implemented to achieve collaborative decision making. EU policy making is a cycle: define policy, impact assessment including public consultation, design policy and adoption, transpose in each nation (particular interpretation), monitor and control, policy review, and then start again a new phase or cycle. Most of the EU sanctions to Member States have been related to environmental laws. In her group, they put a lot of effort to connect environmental regulation with other legislation (like CAP and WFD).

Initial reaction to Declaration: Data and information sharing is indeed very important, but a lot of data is already available. Following the Aarhus Convention, public authorities are obliged to make their data public. There is also information address to the public, like a directive to share information downstream and create environmental applications like Apps for the smartphones. SEMS is the Shared Environmental Information System, relevant to provide data also for citizens (it is under development). WISE, Water Information System for Europe, is a part of SEMS.

Interesting things in the Declaration: Policy makers are very diverse group that cannot be unified. Policy makers at the EU level need pan European data, otherwise they cannot develop good policies.

Positive facts of the Declaration: The scientific ambassador is an excellent idea, although DG ENV already has some similar experts.

Some more points of the Declaration need to be highlighted: There is a growing disconnection between citizens and nature (we need to raise awareness). Participatory process in local decision making is crucial (new technologies can help promoting these processes). The reliability of data is also a problem, as well as how scientists filter contradictory information. Citizens can choose, e.g. food labels. Eutrophication is only the top of the iceberg; we are talking here about governance and environmental democracy.

Cit: On what are environmental indicators based? Are they comparable? New technologies (social networks, smart phones) can be exclusive for a lot of people. Sanctions to countries may be too soft, sometimes it is more worthy pay sanctions than implement environmental plans.

Cit (Diego Viviani): I am also fully represented in AWARE: as citizen, as biologist, and as mayor. Even if we are inside EU it is difficult to take right decisions to improve the environment, it is difficult for

instance to regulate the agriculture coming from external countries, it is difficult to ask our farmers and fishermen for competitiveness when they have to comply with strict regulations, while others outside EU have not.

KF: New technologies are getting more and more important, and the digital gap is closing. EC is making efforts so that technology is available for everyone.

Indicators are first carefully selected and then maintained at a cost. Sanctions may be too soft. It is better to assist states to implement and shorten the gap between countries and the EC.

Sci (Kristina Veidemane): Data rely on national monitoring systems, which are the first thing cut due to the present economic crisis, so we are losing this long-term information...

Sci (Andreas Bryhn): Environmental indicators are so numerous that they have to be picked up, we cannot measure everything.

Cit: An example: the impact of revolutionary means and connection between doctors and patients is not scientifically based. It is the same in environmental science.

KF: Environmental monitoring is high in DG ENV agenda, although the particular national situations are unknown for them. It could be interesting to have more information on that and discuss the reasons. There is a controversy in SPI. Originally it was science to policy, then dialogue, and now the new paradigm with the third circle (stakeholders, including citizens).

DG ENV is revising the indicators, what is measured in all environmental legislation. There may be an evolution.

KF: Her recommendations for the citizens: (1) Build stronger communities at all levels, get involved and engage scientists locally. (2) Push professional schools for education. (3) Interact with parliamentarians (it is their job!). (4) Use the existing and ask for new stakeholders' consultations (EC is already launching some).

How can you convince other people that were not on AWARE? AWARE is an excellent initiative, we need local knowledge to develop options that will be accepted by citizens. The Declaration includes a lot of key issues but there are some big barriers. AWARE could be enlarged to embrace broader coastal policies/issues now, like integrated coastal zone management.

Cit: The results are not quick. Why is there a difference between the citizens' and the policy-makers' point of view? Is it due to differences in formation or information?

Aud (Paolo Cesaro): The STREAM project, in which he works as communicator, focus on the gap between all the actors involved in water, including also Small and Medium Enterprises. They try to reinforce the dissemination of information.

Related to the consultation process going-on in Brussels, stakeholders are usually included, but not the citizens. There are always the same organizations and the same people responding to consultations, mostly from Brussels.

14:30-15:00	<p>YM: Welcome back and introduction of the afternoon session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denis Bailly, SPICOSA project scientific coordinator: The SPICOSA project. Feedback to the AWARE Declaration. <p>He is an economist specialised in the marine environment. SPICOSA stands for "Science and Policy Integration for COastal System Assesment". The goal of this recently finished EU project was the integration: connect the scientific knowledge and the politic decision making (Assumption: scientific research is not easily understandable for policy makers). Similarly to AWARE, they developed a method and they applied it in various case studies. First thing to do was a scientific integration of knowledge, so that scientists can provide a unified answer of a complex question. Secondly, new connectivity methods between the actors were explored.</p> <p>The approach is based on systems dynamics and integrated diagnosis. Researchers usually work in knowledge transfer for technology and innovation. Through the SPICOSA integrative modelling they integrated all types of knowledge and presented the problem in a holistic way. The SPICOSA participatory modelling used a modelling software platform (ExtendSim) which included numerical models and user friendly graphical interfaces. The 3 main modules were: natural resources, uses, and governance & regulations.</p> <p>Their main question was: What can we do to improve the situation of our coastal ecosystems? If there is not civic engagement, preferably involving scientists, nothing can be done to produce changes and solve the problems. So SPICOSA provided information to citizens through a webpage, then collected results and produced a comparative analysis (interpretation), with a lot of graphic design. It is a collaborative interdisciplinary work.</p> <p>Related to the AWARE Declaration, Denis Bailly agrees that the problem is working with complexity. Complexity means that the sum of the factors is more than all the individual factors. We need to make evolve the policy framework (WFD and others) based on a philosophy of <u>integration</u>. We need locally pertinent solutions, and the engagement of local actors applying the existing systems, no developing new ones. The Declaration raises the question of environmental democracy. Science launched AWARE and SPICOSA, but the decision should be social.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camino Lique, JRC, AWARE partner: Recent results from the AWARE online survey. <p>An online survey was launched with the aim of asking for feedback on the AWARE approach, and identifying ways to enhance the connectivity between research and policy-making. There were more than 50 respondents, mostly from academia. Even if directly addressed, it is very difficult to attract the interest of policy-makers. Based on the respondents' expertise and opinion, enhancing connectivity, promoting public environmental awareness and involving the civil society may improve the water quality and management in Europe. Participatory approaches are not too difficult to be implemented at a local level.</p> <p>The respondents generally do not experience good cooperation amongst scientists, stakeholders, policy-makers and citizens. The largest gap is perceived between scientists and citizens, while the</p>
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	<p>only acceptable relationship is seen when experts research relevant issues for policy-makers.</p> <p>Most of the organizations use as a mean to share information posters, written press, radio and online platforms. Social networking is not so common but is planned to be used in the future.</p>
15:00-16:30	<p>YM: Change from European to regional level. Introduction of the speakers, including local authorities and water managers.</p> <p>Round-table: Enhancing connections for an improved coastal water management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcella Zappaterra, President of the Ferrara Province: Perspectives from the Po Delta area. <p>The AWARE work has been very good in terms of quality and depth, specially because it is very difficult to engage citizens at the level of the AWARE participants (can the citizens respond to this provocation?). The Ferrara Province promoted good participative initiatives within Agenda 21, but in AWARE the commitment and goal of participatory process are better. The Sacca di Goro case study is very particular. It is a mono-economy of clam farming, which makes the involvement easier. In the Ferrara Province they practise the coordination between different institutional levels. We have a lot of participatory practice and experience at local level, the novelty of AWARE is that it mixes effectively the local and the EU level. When it comes to the issue of the multi-level governance, however, the main problem is this: the lower levels (municipalities) speak with the citizens and organize local participation processes from which may come many interesting proposals for action to be taken, but the problem is that the financial resources for implementing what the citizens propose is not in the hand of the lower level authorities. Often the funds are available only at higher levels of government and not easily/immediately accessible for the local decision makers, so the expectations of the citizens are finally not met. Related to the online survey results: the local levels have fewer resources to involve citizens, even if they are the closest. The lack of resources, and consequent lack of impact, can demotivate the participation, since one citizen may see that his/her participation has no reaction in the implementation side.</p> <p>YM: How do you see the problem of lack of connectivity?</p> <p>MZ: The governance proposal of the AWARE project may work. Italy suffers from excessive bureaucracy, we must turn back to local management and try to improve it.</p> <p>YM: Mr. Rene Reisner, from the Ministry of Environment of Estonia, has participated in the AWARE local process and is a member of the project Policy and Science Advisory Group. What is your reaction to the Declaration? How do you work at the local level and with the EU?</p> <p>Aud (Rene Reisner): He already knew some of the recommendations. Some of them cannot be implemented (e.g. making legislation more strict, it will bring more trouble and cost for people). The point is making management more effective. They usually work at the level of river basin (developing river basin management plans as required by the WFD), they have organised public consultations and hundreds of</p>

meeting during the last years. In Estonia it seems to be unsuccessful because they could not engage lay citizens, only local institutions, NGOs and stakeholders.

YM: Mr. Bruno Rakedjian, from the French Ministry of Sustainable Development, has participated in the AWARE local process. In France there have been large mobilisations, how did it work? How do you work at the local level and with the EU?

Bruno Rakedjian: They are pushed by EU directives to organise participative processes in which they included water actors but not specifically citizens. All these complementary experiences should be collected to trap this energy. For example, citizens can help to filter suitable documents produced by the Ministry. We should reach an understandable conclusion with the citizens' dimension.

Regarding the local and regional scales, France has a large centralism but the Ministry works closely with local managers. They have a large organization structured in the Agence de l'Eau, which manage the resources.

- **Andris Andrušaitis, BONUS science programme manager: Perspectives from the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea.**

BONUS (www.bonusportal.org) is a joint venture of tens of scientific institutions around the Baltic Sea. Funding comes from the 8 states around the Baltic and from the EU. They have recently enlarged the programme for other 5-6 years. They produce science in a policy-driven way. Most of the unknowns are in the societal side.

There is a lot of technology implemented in society in fields related to consuming, but it is not developed in environmental issues. The reasons are lack of real motivation and need, and also differences in languages and methods.

BONUS runs 60 projects mostly led by natural science, with maybe a small part of societal science. Within these projects you can already perceive the differences in languages and methods.

Policy-makers are usually not included in the process since they are partners, they have stakeholders' platforms or observers.

Regarding the Declaration: He really agrees with the main message: there must be more environmental democracy because we are all living on the environment. But, how can it be implemented? There is an interesting point in the Declaration: citizens need institutions but individual voices have to be heard in those institutions. Will it have any effect out of the AWARE participants? Here, education is the key point. He was surprised that the citizens did not know some basic scientific concepts before AWARE (as stated in their Declaration). Now, they understand the WFD and methods, and they are able to judge correctly the failures of this directive. We need an understandable leaflet/document to explain this directive to the citizens (AWARE citizens had 8 days to learn and discuss about this subject).

We need a new mechanism, apart of the stakeholders' involvement, to achieve a snowball effect of AWARE. How can we achieve knowledge-based public opinion? Because if we achieve it, policy and politics will need to follow it.

Aud (Gert Becker): To illustrate how powerful citizens can be and how things can be rolled out, he provides an example: in Stuttgart it was politically decided to build a new station, but suddenly it was changed

due to the pressure of internet organizations and media pulled by citizens. The emotional signals used in that case were cutting trees for the construction. This action led to a consultation process which is less emotional, more scientific and knowledge-based.

- **Stephane Buffetaut, President of the TEN Section (Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society) of the EESC: Perspectives from the EESC.**

He was the rapporteur on the EESC Opinion NAT/429 entitled "Sustainable development of coastal regions", very relevant today. Are there similarities between that document and the Declaration?

The goal of the EESC is to get a participative democracy. The main similarity between the two documents is to highlight the need of interconnection, of providing knowledge to people (e.g. creation of good practices in marine protected areas, establish links between the people involved in coastal water management). EESC Opinion NAT/429 speaks about scientists and science, and their dialogues with other points of view.

Apart from the possible dialogues, at the time of decision it is the politician who decides. A difficult point of civil involvement is to avoid the frustration it may cause. Normally, in the public events you meet the typical specialists or stakeholders grouped in associations, you rarely get normal people and their creativity.

In the Declaration there are some rational or evident proposals like to reinforce the transboundary work, establish common criteria of water quality, get a common vision, or share good practises. Nevertheless, it seems quite naïve related to other issues like agriculture. As an example, some proposals from environmental associations are perfectly logical, e.g. we should use train instead of trucks for transport. But the logical decisions are sometimes blocked by certain organizations. There is equilibrium between different interests, you cannot satisfy everyone. In a changing and adaptative society, the "ultraconservationist" trend of some organisations may be dangerous for the system.

Aud (Francesco Tornatore): He was involved in the implementation of the WFD in the Po River basin (in particular in charge of the participatory process) and he was involved in the AWARE local process. The WFD participatory process was difficult because they did not know how to do it, as the river basin management plans is a tough subject. Nowadays, participative democracy is present in more and more EU directives. Territorial governance is becoming so important because there is a political crisis, a crisis of the politics' representativeness. Participative and representative democracy are sometimes accepted and sometimes not, probably due to education problems.

FG: When we join a group of lay citizens we can also raise a voice, even if it is not as loud as the one from traditional organisations and lobbies. This is a key message from the AWARE Declaration.

Sci (Chiara Mocenni): In AWARE citizens participated from the beginning, not once a decision had been taken, so they participate in the decision making process. Scientists should support the decision making process in a transparent, objective, scientific way (even if they may disagree in certain aspects). This is what we tried to do in

AWARE.

Cit: To involve actively citizens is indeed very difficult. But the institutions need citizens more than citizens need the institutions. In the representative democracy ("société civile organisée") we need social, economic and environmental approaches. It does not matter if the citizens are organised in associations or not. The important thing is getting the horizontal and holistic approach.

Cit: I think sustainable agriculture is possible since some years ago, and in the future, we can change the natural systems. Sometimes politics take unpopular decisions following economical pressures.

I would like to thank the speakers of this Conference for their critical analysis of the Declaration.

- **Paolo Casalino, Apulia Region, Relations with European Union Institutions: Perspectives from the Committee of Regions.**

Local and regional institutions are key in the water management, as reflected in a recent report they have produced. The point of view of EECS and Committee of Regions related to the water blueprint 2012 has been requested by the Hungarian presidency. The Committee also works at the Euro-Mediterranean scale, particularly in desertification and climate change issues. In Maghreb (e.g. Tunisia) there are examples of the wider problem of governance related with water issues.

Regarding the problems between agriculture and water, in the south of Europe most of the water is used for agriculture. The problem is that there is no conscience of recycling and there is a lack of proper payment for water. The Committee advises to use the direct payments to farmers for a better and more sustainable agriculture, for example through requirements in the use of water, best techniques, increase the training in farmers, who uses more than needed pays, who pollutes pays, etc.

This moment is perfect to talk about participative process with policy-makers, also with the Parliament. We should disseminate now the AWARE information.

YM: This kind of initiative, pushing citizens involvement, can only be made by a large organisation like yours. AWARE cannot go so far.

PC: They produce a point of view, like a high goal, because the situation is positive. They will try to go further because they believe in these proposals.

SB: Participative democracy is a concept that involves people from the beginning of the process, it is very important.

In the Declaration Medium and Small Enterprises are not present, and they are also very important.

Aud (Olivier Rousselot): The "Syndicat de Gestion des Eaux de Paris" has a scientific partnership, but the relationship with citizens is different. Usually consultations are too late in the decision making process, they should be performed while discussing the objectives. In the "Syndicat" they find problems to understand each other and to perform democracy mostly because people (citizens or organisations) lack appropriate formation.

16:30-17:00	<p>Philippe Quevauviller, EC DG Research & Innovation representative</p> <p>He works supporting projects of environmental protection (e.g. from flooding). He has a scientific background and previous experience dealing with groundwater in DG ENV. He is interested in the legislative-participative link.</p> <p>He is surprised by the AWARE initiative. Traditionally, the dialogue is implemented only within Brussels. Involving people is very original.</p> <p>The WFD is very complex and integrative. The scientific community may contribute to this directive as far as there is anticipation (some years in advance). For instance, now the 2nd cycle of the directive is coming and will be based in previous evidences. There will be a review every 6 years.</p> <p>The type of information we need from scientists is very specific in time and form. The main difficulty is the translation of information from researchers to policy-makers and the definition of needs from policy-makers to researchers, both at EU and national level. This is crucial for the transfer of knowledge.</p> <p>There are different stages in research implementation, namely dissemination, communication, uptake and implementation. Sometimes we have very good results but no connection and knowledge transfer. Who does this work? DG Research & Innovation wants the projects to be linked and to communicate with local people, but it is not mandatory so far. We need a proper interface between all the actors involved created by experts. We have a good example implemented by the Catalan Water Agency that connects research ideas to results, small and medium enterprises, prototypes, and eventually market (leading to integration and transfer of knowledge). We cannot have a blind faith scientific results, they can be inaccurate (e.g. the case of dioxins in fly ashes).</p> <p>He wants to provide some constructive critics to the Declaration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The concept of holistic view is very good. We need integrated legislation. Citizens have to play a role, they can empower institutions. Socio-economic factors have to be considered, but it is already within the WFD in the impact assessment. - Other key concepts: Prevention is better than cure; Connectivity must be strengthened; Education is crucial. - Does "independent science" exist? - Why should the WFD be changed? It should be just implemented. Re-write it could be a huge work, it must be just reviewed (as foreseen). - The connection between WFD and CAP and MSFD is being built, but it is complex. - The transboundary approach is already included in the WFD. - AWARE had a very good approach towards science but maybe not so good towards policy. <p>FG: How can we continue the AWARE initiative?</p> <p>PQ: The Declaration will be transmitted, it will not be dead words. It is a very interesting initiative.</p> <p>SB: AWARE arrives at a moment of crisis in the European</p>

	<p>representativeness and identity, crisis in the political oligarchy, very much influenced by media. Citizens are less motivated as reflected by the high voting abstention in many countries, the "Indignados" movement in Spain, the populism... So this initiative is very interesting at this moment, the decision making process should involve the civil society.</p> <p>Green policy is not always the solution, since the decisions have economical, social and human consequences that cannot be optimal for everyone (e.g. stop of tune fishing).</p>
17.00-17.15	<p>Carlo Sessa, AWARE Coordinator: Report back of the main conclusions.</p> <p>AWARE will continue 6 more months to take up this Declaration and discussion today. Everything will be available through internet. We have many interesting points to exploit. AWARE is planning an evaluation conference next 20th October to discuss about the possible "snowball effect". He hopes that AWARE had developed a new approach.</p> <p>In Europe, it took centuries to obtain the right of becoming equal against the law. AWARE should develop a similar concept in the research and policy field, whereby citizens will be treated with equal dignity against scientists and policy makers when dealing with sustainability issues (the concept of doing sustainability research and action together).. In their review the citizens can play at the same level, as demonstrated by AWARE, of course with a different role from experts and politicians. The consequences of this are still to be seen.</p>

5. MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The Conference "Linking research to policy in the water sector: Connecting people for a sustainable coastal water management in Europe" successfully established a dialogue between experienced scientists and policy-makers and lay citizens. The lively discussions were focused both on specific coastal waters problems and on general issues of connectivity in the water sector. All the aims of the Conference were achieved, namely:

- The AWARE citizens' panel presented its Declaration and recommendations to the broad public.
- Different AWARE participants (citizens, scientists, stakeholders and water managers) exposed their personal experiences and opinions within the AWARE project.
- Many different points of view were confronted, both related to water management and to public participation.
- Representatives from EU institutions, international bodies, associations and academia became aware of the AWARE results, and provided valuable recommendations and constructive critics for future actions.

- The concepts of participative democracy and environmental democracy within the EU were lively discussed, with a lot of references to the WFD.

The Declaration (its contents and form) was highly valued by all the participants since it reflects the extraordinary understanding and commitment of the citizens' panel. Some of the recommendations are thought to be very logical and creative (e.g. the scientific ambassadors) while others are labelled as rather naïve (e.g. the transformation of the EU agriculture). However, all the discussions tried to find new arguments and more feasible "middle ways".

The most practical recommendations provided to the AWARE partners were those of (i) producing practical guidelines to allow future replications of the AWARE pilot experience, (ii) try to achieve a snowball effect of the AWARE process, under the present favourable socio-political situation, and (iii) move into broader frameworks that give more relevance to the socio-economic aspects, such as the Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

The most critical points for this kind of participatory processes are agreed to be: (i) the active involvement and engagement of the civil society in sustainability issues (where AWARE has succeed), and (ii) the continuity or durability of the initiatives.

The lack of connectivity amongst different actors (experts, water managers, policy-makers, stakeholders, citizens) and levels (institutional levels, cultural backgrounds, scientific domains) is unanimously considered as one of the main obstacles to have sustainable and resilience ecosystems. Improving communication should be, therefore, one of the milestones for our society and for future EU policies.

6. ANNEX 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE AWARE CITIZENS' DECLARATION

We are a group of 30 citizens coming from five European countries who volunteered and were selected randomly to participate to the AWARE European project - a project that connects people for better European coastal water management (www.aware-eu.net). During the project we discussed three very different case studies (the Sacca di Goro lagoon in Italy, the Gulf of Riga in Estonia and Latvia, and the Southern North Sea and the Seine, Somme and Scheldt river basins in France and Belgium). Over more than a year of meetings and discussions, we were asked to provide our points of view and assessment on what research tells us, what policy is doing, and how scientific knowledge, policy making and citizens' experience and values could be better connected to provide for sustainable water management choices, now and for the next generations.

How can we achieve a better and more sustainable coastal water management in Europe? Here is a summary of our main conclusions:

ANOTHER APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND COMPLEXITY

Throughout AWARE we focused on the challenge of eutrophication, but it is clear to us that issues of water quality cannot be restricted to that one challenge alone. We observe that **eutrophication is in fact only one point of entry into broader ecosystem health issues**, which include pollutants coming from both the land and the sea. We underline that only a **holistic, or multidimensional, approach** can help all involved actors (citizens, stakeholders, experts from different disciplines, decision makers) understand the complex issues surrounding water quality. Only such an approach can receive acceptance from relevant actors, and lead to sustainable and long-term solutions.

AN UPDATE OF THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE (WFD)

We realised that there has been little room given to citizens so far in the implementation of the WFD. We believe we are legitimate actors that should be part of the decision making process defining what "good" environmental status is, and given the chance to share our opinions with scientists and key policy-makers. **We - the citizens - are too often out of the system.** We have heard evidence that the European Water Framework Directive's goals may not be reached in many areas of Europe. We are concerned about the quality of our coastal waters and by the lack of consistency we observe in water quality data, in the monitoring of water quality, and in the enforcement power of the European Union. We call for an updated Water Framework Directive, which will allow for better continuous and participatory improvement and strict control of the implementation of the Directive, as well as for **more consistency in the measurement of data, and between different EU policies**. For example, could DG Environment of the European Commission, as working on a transversal topic, be playing a bigger role in making bridges between the WFD and the Common Agricultural Policy, or between the WFD and the Marine Strategy?

TIMELY, LOCAL, AND RELEVANT SOLUTIONS ON THE GROUND

We know that we are currently still seeing the effects on coastal waters of several decades of human practice and we know that the ecosystem has a strong capacity of inertia: change will come slowly. This is why the time for talking and for standing still has passed, and **the time for actions has come**. We are aware that no single solution will be the best per se. We strongly recommend that all options be evaluated against **environmental and socioeconomic criteria** – especially those relevant at the local level.

It is clear to us that challenges are different for every region and we therefore encourage **solutions that make sense and are most effective at the local level**. One region may benefit from increasing the number of waste water treatment plants, but supporting a transition to organic farming may be the best for another area.

BETTER CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN RESEARCH, POLICY-MAKING AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Throughout the AWARE process, we observed and experienced important gaps between all concerned actors. According to us, these gaps jeopardize the achievement of sustainable water management in Europe. It has become clear that expert information both from researchers and from practitioners are necessary to take better, sustainable decisions on water quality. Scientific experience and consultations are crucial. But so is the information from citizens, farmers, fishermen, and other involved actors. **Scientific ambassadors** in fact, would be a great way to “translate” critical information for citizens, business representatives, and politicians alike – as it happened with the information we benefited from in the AWARE process. We also push for better connectivity between all concerned actors at the **water basin scale**, across borders, **including non EU member states when necessary**.

BETTER INFORMATION TO KEY ACTORS

Citizens are not the only ones who should benefit from better and clearer information on water quality issues. Other stakeholders also need to receive full information in order to help them make better choices. **Dialogue with farmers, fishers, tourist organisations** and other stakeholders should be strengthened and reinforced. We as citizens can approach farmer lobbies for instance, but scientists also need to enter into a **dialogue with the citizens** about coastal water health and upstream challenges. A special focus should also be placed on **children’s education** because they also need to act now, and in the future. Because **policy makers are the ones who can truly make** change happen, we encourage them to listen to citizens and scientists to have the most enlightened and appropriate decisions.

What are we ready to do as citizens?

We are ready to be part of a change. We recognise our share of responsibility for the impact on the environment and therefore we are willing to act – as consumers, as part of the decision making process, alone or collectively.

Although politicians, business and scientists more often communicate with each other through existing channels (like in the Science-policy interface) we found

that **citizens are often left out, or information about water quality issues does not reach us.** Keeping us, citizens, in the dark prevents us from making full use of our ability to contribute to the decision-making process. We remind that with the right type of expert information we were able to say precisely what we are ready and not ready to do, and explain why we hold those opinions. **Including our opinions would result in more sustainable water management decisions.**

We as citizens are willing to take the first steps and hope other parties will follow. Join us in this change!

7. ANNEX 2: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EVENT



