

# Decentralized Cooperation Belgium - Romania

4<sup>th</sup> Forum October 25-27, 2013 Leuven

## Workshop : Water

### *Water for him/her, water for me... where and when ?*

These are the questions asked all over the World in 2013, the year the United Nations declared to be the international year of cooperation about water.

For many people the problem of water is in the first place a problem of the South, and in this circumstances a problem fitting in the dialogue between North and South.

Without denying the importance of this reality we have to face the European situation and certify the access to drinkable water and the management of the watersupply as a problem.

Let's not forget water is one of the inherent parts of nature and in this an issue for all of us. The access to drinkable water is a Universal right and the use of this source of nature (for transport, producing of electricity, geothermics, ...) has to serve the public interest.

At this moment 5% of the European citizens have not access to drinkable water and 10% has no sanitary facilities!

Water in Europe is becoming a problem! Some new studies make clear that 20% of the surfacewaters are seriously in danger by pollution, 60% of the European cities use more than their sources can provide and 50% of the 'wetlands' are in danger! That's why the EU made a general law. According to this law in 2015 all European water should be in good condition. But does this decision guarantee the access to drinkable water to all European citizens?

In Romania are the local councils ( from the departments, the local councils) as owners of the main part of the infrastructure responsible to guarantee the access to drinkable water and to sanitary facilities.

According to the last population census in 2011 66% of the households have access to the distribution of drinkable water. BUT, there is a big difference between the cities and the rural areas! In the cities 91% of the inhabitants have access, in the rural areas only 37,2% !

The sector of water is a complex sector in Belgium, with special regulations in the different regions of the country, with several actors, most of them organized as a public service, with specific targets during the cycle of the use of the water.

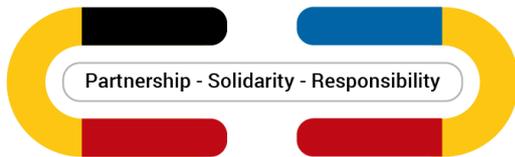
From 2005 on we notice a strong increase of the price of drinkable water for the families. This increase is stronger in Belgium than in other European countries! Why?

And an important question, as well in Belgium as in Romania: who is paying for the treatment of the wastewater? Is it paid by general taxes or do the citizens pay for the treatment of their own wastewater?

In what way do we organize the efficient distribution of drinkable water, at a correct and fair price: by the local council? An intermunicipal? Or by private sector?

To finish: what is the individual responsibility in the preservation and the right use of the "capital of water" we can use ?

To make sure all the citizens can take advantage of the fundamental right of access to drinkable water and sanitary facilities **it is of the utmost importance to protect our water supply!**



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## Presentations of 'good practices' on the level of the local community

- a) **The community of Tasca in the province of Neamt** faced a great deal of problems due too the floods of the rivers passing true the community. After a extensive study the community decided to build several small dams in the rivers in order to regulate the flow rate at the desired level. At the same time floodplains were organized and an alarm system to warn of floods was installed. This small projects are realized with European money. Deforestation is one of the causes for the floods. Also in this community! To counteract the effects of deforestation 1000 trees have been planned in cooperation with a private compagny and with the support of youngsters in the community.
- b) **Projects to make people aware in the whole region are necessary but are not sufficient to solve all the problems.** Every single citizen is responsible for the correct use of the watersupplies. This responsibility has to be teached to all of us en sure the kids. The local elected politicians and the whole community has to be mobilised to organize programs and actions in several villages as planned in Godinesti in the department Gorj.
- c) **We all know a river doesn't stop to flow at the border of a village, a community or a province!** A river doesn't know borders. That's why it's important to pay attention to the quality of the water and the polution of the water. That's why the idea grew to have a consultation between the users and so platform of consultation where installed. In the Wallonian region they have 16 'river contracts' active. But what is the result of it? What are the effects for the local counsels, the local responsible persons, the water, the citizen/user?

## Roundtable based on the presentations of the attendee:

1. Ms. Irina Lucavetchi, directie 'water' of Siret and auteur of several studies about the access to drinkable water in Romania, Bulgaria, ...
2. Mr. ?? of SPGE (public institution about water) in the Walloon region
3. Mr. ?? of the international organisation "Solidarity-Water-Europe" for PECO and Moldavia.
4. Mr. Alexandru Dragan, mayor of Tasca (province of Neamt) and substitute member of the Committee of the Regions in Europe in Brussels.
5. Mr. Aurariu Coman, vice-mayor of the community Godinesti (province of Gorj)
6. Mr. ... representative of the River Contract 'Haute Meuse'

## Possible follow-up of the workshop

1. Write a motion to present to the responsible persons in Belgium and Romania
2. Publication of the interventions
3. 'Delta60' organized in Costuleni (Republic of Moldavia) for the 4th time about the waterproblem on 3th and 4th of August 2014
4. Organizing a banc of materials with possitive local initiatives about access to drinkable water and good water managment.
5. Others...