

January 2012

### Welcome

*It is clear by now that 2011 continued to be a climate-change-year. After winter's flood and spring's 'summertime' we got a wet, cold summer followed by a warm, dry autumn. A very special year indeed! We don't know what 2012 will bring us in terms of weather, but one thing is clear: next year is AMICE's final one! We've been very ambitious when designing this project, so the AMICE partnership will be having a quite exciting year! But the Meuse is absolutely worth all our efforts so of course we go for it! [Number 1](#), [number 2](#), [number 3](#) and [number 4](#) of Meuse and Climate can still be downloaded. But first of all we wish you a great, happy New Year!*



### Word from the Associate Expert in Environmental Affairs, Transboundary Cooperation Section, Water Convention Secretariat; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

*What's the mission of the Programme of pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins under the UNECE Water Convention?*

To support countries and specifically countries with economies in transition in their efforts to develop adaptation strategies in transboundary basins. To create positive examples demonstrating the benefits of transboundary cooperation in climate change adaptation. And to provide a forum for exchange of experience, good practices and lessons learnt regarding adaptation projects in different parts of the region.

*Why did you invite the AMICE project to its meetings?*

On the one hand AMICE is similar to other pilot projects: it has the same objectives and promotes transboundary collaboration. On the other hand, it is special as it combines research and modelling with practical elements like the ecosystem restoration projects and the crisis exercise. It is a good practical example of a 2-track approach: scientific and practical. It also includes components of communication to the local population which we often forget.

*Why is it important to collaborate between the transboundary river basins?*

It is important to learn from each other, to exchange ideas and get a fresh mind; also to reflect about one's own work; create

collaboration, partnerships, eventually also resulting in twinning.

*Do you have a favorite river? Why?*

The Neckar, because I grew up there and as a child we went swimming in the river and playing at its borders. It is not much of a transboundary one but as it is part of the Rhine basin, it is a bit international too. But in fact I like all rivers.

*Do you have a message for the AMICE partnership?*

Congratulations for the interesting work you are doing with all those different partners. Continue this work, take up project results in your own organisations, make clear links with the Meuse commission and continue sharing experience with our platform.



*Mrs. S. Koeppel, Associate Expert in Environmental Affairs, Transboundary Cooperation Section, Water Convention Secretariat, UNECE, Geneva.*

### In this issue:

Word from Mrs. S. Koeppel	1	Transnat. flood management exercise	4
Site visit Steenbergse Vliet	2 –3	Joint publication; Joint conference	5
Drought and crops	3	Meeting at Ny; visit from EPAMA board	5
Sensitization action Ardennes	3	News from the Cluster SIC Adapt!	6
IWASA	4	Coming soon	6

## Site visit to the Steenbergse Vliet on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2011

This was AMICE's second visit to this investments, so we could appreciate what was done in the meantime.

Participants were welcomed at the new town hall at Steenberg with coffee and a local sausage roll. Ron Lambregts from the hosting Waterboard Brabantse Delta shortly explained the aims and realisations of the investment. Then Maité Fournier, from EPAMA, gave an overview of the AMICE Project. Koen Dijkman from BKKC (Brabants Kenniscentrum Kunst en Cultuur) explained how the GPS route was designed and how it is a wonderful example of collaboration between the local authorities, the Waterboard and artists. This is about a new way to experience water, nature, culture, patrimony and art. Animations can also be seen on [www.kunstroutesbrabant.nl](http://www.kunstroutesbrabant.nl).



After these introductions, a bus brought us up to the starting point near the investment's billboard. A short walk on the new summerdike gave us the possibility to appreciate the work done and to discuss topics as water retention, agriculture, high water, etc.



Here we're standing on the new summerdike; on the left a new bypass was dug out; the old summerdike is situated behind the reeds far left. The poplars on the right mark the limit of the former valley of the Steenbergse Vliet. Just right of the new summerdike is a drainage ditch to the profit of the farmer, who can still grow corn on the arable fields.



On the left, the new bypass; the Steenbergse Vliet is behind the reeds on the background; on the right, the reeds again and the Steenbergse Vliet.

We could also appreciate how a digging machine was able to work in a very precise way thanks to advanced GPS technology. It is possible to remove just 1 cm of ground!



And then we had a great outdoor lunch.



In the afternoon, AMICE Partners went biking along the different points of interest (POI's). This was the first time we got on bikes during site visits so this was a firstling!



Then there was a final drink which made it possible for all of the participants to further discuss projects and share experiences and having a really nice time at the very downstream part of the Meuse basin.

Thanks to the Waterboard Brabantse Delta for making this possible.

All of the lectures, the press releases and more photos are available from the website. [Click here !](#)



## State of the art at Steenbergse Vliet

The works are almost finished! So far, connexions with the Mark were recently made. The project is now ready for high waters in the next winter season. A volume of 80.000 m3 of soil were removed which results in 3,5 ha of space for water. The work is not ready yet for final delivery, but the contractor removed his equipment to another job and is temporarily in "winterstop". The reason is that there is currently no possibility to bring soil to the land used by farmers. The remaining work, especially the removal of soil deposits and the processing of vacant old concrete tubes into a bat home will be done later. The bat home is prepared together with the Department of Knowledge and Research of the Waterboard. It has been agreed that by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 all works should be completed to enable the approaching breeding season and the development of nature.



Bats' future home.



This dike was dug through in order to create new wetland.

## Drought: thirsty crops!

Drought is one of the hazards expected to be exacerbated by climate change. In order to study the possible impacts of droughts on agriculture in the Meuse catchment, ULg, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech has developed a common methodology within the AMICE partnership. It is based on a physically based model called EPIC. EPIC is able to simulate crop growth on the basis of soil data, agricultural calendar used in fields and meteorological data. Results have been generated for time slices 2021-2050 and 2071-2100. It appears that when some crops will be penalized by climate change, like maize, others will be enhanced, like wheat and barley. Whatever the crop studied, it appears that the inter-annual variation of yields could be strongly increased in the future. Moreover, crops would start to grow earlier and quickly reach maturity, so a modification of crop calendar could be one of the ways of adapting to climate change.

## Sensitization action in the Ardennes

In September, RIOU's local partner Natagora/BNVS carried out a rather playful sensitization action on natural water retention.

With this action, we wanted the people to get better acquainted with our organisation, but above all, we wanted to heighten the public awareness of the 'natural water retention' theme which is an important main line in all of our work in the nature reserves.



**GROBES GEWINNSPIEL**

**Wann ist die (das) Maas voll?**

Machen Sie mit beim großen Gewinnspiel der Naturschutzorganisation Natagora-BNVS! Es winken zahlreiche interessante Preise für Groß und Klein, Alt und Jung. Außerdem erfahren Sie allerhand Wissenswertes über unsere Naturschutzarbeit zum Thema Quellschutz und Wassermanagement als Überschwemmungsvorbeugung.

Mitmachen ist ganz einfach:  
auf [www.natagora-bnvs.be/Gewinnspiel](http://www.natagora-bnvs.be/Gewinnspiel) klicken,  
eine Frage beantworten und abschicken.  
Oder im Natagora-BNVS Sekretariat anrufen  
und das Formular wird Ihnen zugeschickt.  
Die Gewinner werden per E-mail oder Telefon benachrichtigt.  
Wir freuen uns über Ihre Teilnahme!

Natagora-BNVS Meddell 162, 4770 Arnel Tel: 080 / 44.81.44



**MITMACHEN !**

[www.natagora-bnvs.be/Gewinnspiel](http://www.natagora-bnvs.be/Gewinnspiel)

**BIS ZUM 30. SEPTEMBER 2011**




This postcard was sent to 32.000 households in the German-speaking region of Belgium. On its back side, is a small quiz: people could go to the website and answer a short (and easy) question. About 5000 people participated, which is really huge.

Winners got rubber boots, backpacks, river pearl mussel games and free BNVS-memberships.

Reactions were very positive!

Some people who won a River pearl mussel game bought another one as a Christmas present.

Three backpack winners became members of the organisation because the prize was absolutely fabulous. The rubber boots were much appreciated too and people said they are very comfortable. And winners of a free one year membership promised to become regular members next year.



## Not to be missed: International Symposium on Hydraulic Engineering Aachen (IWASA)



The 42nd edition of the two day symposium to be held on January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and hosted by AMICE Partner IWW-RWTH will be a really remarkable one!

Over the years, this International Symposium on Hydraulic Engineering in Aachen (IWASA) has become a renowned meeting point and information center among experts. The conference mainly addresses civil engineers, researchers and practitioners in hydraulic engineering and water resources management, but it is public to any interested party. Lectures are given by invited speakers coming from research institutions, companies and public administrations. Topicality and relevance of the chosen subjects attract between 350 up to 450 visitors from Germany and the neighbouring countries every year.

This year, AMICE will be present at IWASA and Partners will deliver speeches in all of the sessions.

You can download the programme [here](#)

## Long awaited for: the transnational flood crisis management exercise.

EPAMA, APS, CETMEF and the Walloon Region organised a major flood management exercise on the Meuse river. Name code MEUSEX (in France) and HYDROTEST (in Belgium).

The water started rising on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2050 in Neufchateau. It flowed to the Meuse *département* where several communities were severely impacted. The *Préfecture* had to set-up a crisis coordination center with all emergency services. The army was called to reinforce a weak dike and the firemen visited several houses in Saint-Mihiel to ask people to evacuate. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, it had reached the Ardennes where the *Préfecture* also had to set-up its crisis center. Such a flood had never been experienced, it was bigger than 1995! The high waters impacted Dinant on November 16<sup>th</sup>, in the Province of Namur, and two days later the city of Engis, in the Province of Liège. The civil servant responsible for emergency planning (PLANU) proved to be a key element to anticipate actions.

Of course, all of this was only an exercise, based on a flood scenario that has been calculated to reflect one climate change option: a severe increase of winter precipitations of 25% by the year 2050.

It involved more than 330 participants from France and Belgium : flood forecast services, the Walloon CRC (regional center for crisis), 35 mayors and their emergency services, 3 French *Préfectures* and their emergency services, 3 French DDT (district territorial direction), 1 Army section, the *Etat Major de Défense – East Zone*, representatives from the private sector (PSA Peugeot Citroën, CNPE Chooz, chemical factory Prayon), student observers, journalists, etc.



*Situational point with the Préfet des Ardennes on November 10<sup>th</sup>.*

The exercise was a good opportunity to test internal procedures and information sharing. OSIRIS was used by French local communities. The flood maps and risk maps were also improved: EPAMA could cooperate with SERTIT through the European *Safer* project to display the flood extent on high resolution satellite images, and the Walloon Region displayed the updated hydraulic modelling results from the University of Liège. Both SERTIT and APS worked on 3D views of the event. APS also tested citizens involvement to help measure the water depth in the cities.

We can already say the AMICE Transnational Exercise was a great success. Such a large scale test had never been organised on the Meuse basin. Returns of experiences are being organised in both countries to identify points to be improved in the future. Finally, flood demonstrations are expected in the Netherlands, that will complement observations made in the upstream countries and achieve a better understanding of flood crisis management on the Meuse river.



*Dike strengthening in Lacroix-sur-Meuse.*

*Analyzing the flood risk maps in Engis.*



Presse releases on this exercise (in French) are available from the [website](#).

**As this is one of the very highlights of the AMICE project, a special issue of Meuse and Climate will be dedicated to the transnational exercise once it will be completed with the Dutch part.**

## Joint publication by Belgian and German Partners

The University of Liège, the Technology Institute of Aachen and the Wasserverband Eifel-Rur have jointly signed an article in *Dams and Reservoirs under changing Challenges*.

Opportunities for updating and optimizing current operating rules are being evaluated for the Vesdre reservoirs in Belgium (50 million m<sup>3</sup>) and the Rur complex in Germany (300 million m<sup>3</sup>). This assessment is conducted transnationally at the scale of the Meuse river basin. Common methodological approaches are followed in both countries and operating rules are analyzed in light of common climate change scenarios, recently defined for the whole Meuse basin. Similar risk-based approaches are used consistently in both countries to evaluate the performance of new operating rules in terms of risk reduction for floods and low flows.

Read the full article [here](#)

## Joint Transnational Conference in Katowice, Poland

On 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011, the 13 transnational Programmes currently operating in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation objective organized for the first time a joint conference demonstrating how transnational cooperation helps to improve quality of life in European regions.

The event was a great success for European Transnational Cooperation and reached almost 1000 people (including an online audience participating via live stream). For a taste of what happened in Katowice, [watch the conference highlights](#), look at the pictures and check written as well as drawn conclusions.

The Joint Transnational Conference 2011 demonstrated a successful kick off: we invite you to check this website regularly to find out about future activities jointly implemented by the 13 transnational programmes !



The venue, in Katowice's Academy of Music was great and offered lots of possibilities.



In one of the workshops the AMICE project was presented as a good example of transnational collaboration.

## Public meeting in Ny Works about to start

The works in the Naives valley are finally ready to start! All plans and contracts have been approved by the authorities. We are now waiting for better weather conditions !



A public meeting was organised on December 10<sup>th</sup> to inform the population in details about the works and the schedule for 2012. Because the flood dike in the Naives meadows is only the top of the iceberg ! The integrated management of the Naives basin includes a flood control dike, maintenance of the river to reduce risks related to low-flows, improved waste-water collection and treatment, renovation of the underground river vaults, improvement of the village's architecture (among others: lightening of the fountains and underground electric wires).

50 inhabitants of Ny came to the meeting. There was many practical questions but no opposition, which proves the success of the past years' negotiations and the high quality of the planning.

## EPAMA's Board discover the AMICE investments



*In the Ardennes forest and wetlands*

On October 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011, ten representatives from EPAMA's board went on a tour of the Meuse basin to visit investments implemented by the AMICE and the Maaswerken projects. They visited the Albert Canal, the HOWABO project and the old city of 's-Hertogenbosch, the impressive works on the GrensMaas and the wetlands of the German-speaking Ardennes. A lunch was organised with the Meuse Commission as well.

They noticed several differences with our ways of working and came back with best practices and brilliant ideas.

*At the lock in Hasselt, along the Albert Canal*



## News from the cluster



### Sic Adapt! finalist of the RegioStars Awards 2012

What are RegioStar Awards?

The objective of the **RegioStars Awards** is to identify **good practices** in regional development and to highlight original and **innovative projects** which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions. The RegioStars awards are part of the Commission's Regions for Economic Change initiative, which aims to highlight good practice in urban and regional development. The RegioStars Awards have been organised by the European Commission since 2008.

The five RegioStars Award categories for 2012 are (1) Smart growth, (2) Sustainable growth, (3) Inclusive growth, (4) Citystar Category and (5) Information and Communication Category.

The deadline for submitting applications for the 2012 RegioStars Awards was 15 July 2011. The European Commission has received a record number of 107 applications. The jury of DG Regio's award for innovative projects has chosen *SIC adapt!* as one of 24 finalists. *SIC adapt!* applied under category 2 - Sustainable Growth - and will compete there with four other nominated finalists.

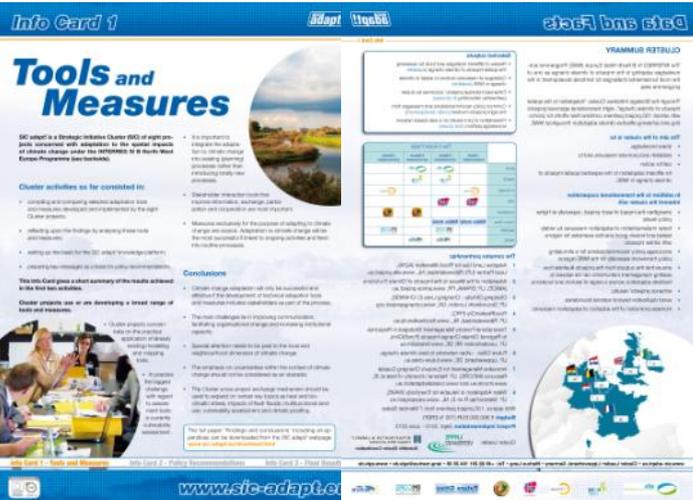
On Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012 there will be a presentation of all finalists to the jury in Brussels and the RegioStars Awards ceremony will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012 on the occasion of the Regions for Economic Change Conference.

Find out more [here](#).

### Sic Adapt! first info card

Want to see at first glance what the Cluster has been up to with regards to climate adaptation tools and measures?

Have a look at the Cluster's First info card: it can be downloaded from the [website](#).



## Climate Changing ? Meuse Adapting !

### Some AMICE figures

	<b>2009-2012</b>
	<b>17 partners</b>
	<b>4 countries</b>
<b>Budget :</b>	<b>8.9 million €</b>
<b>ERDF :</b>	<b>2.8 million €</b>

And don't forget and visit AMICE's film website: [www.amice-film.eu](http://www.amice-film.eu)



### Coming soon

Not to miss! Check our [website](#) for the most recent information

- January 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> 2012: IWASA 42<sup>nd</sup> International Symposium on Hydraulic Engineering in Aachen. Theme this time is 'Flood Waters—A permanent Challenge'.
- Second half of April: AMICE site visit to the lock of Ham in Flanders; at that moment the huge Archimedes screws will be visible
- Flood management demonstration in the Netherlands

### Contacts and credits:

AMICE Lead Partner - Coordinator : Maïté Fournier (EPAMA)

AMICE Communication Officer : Martine Lejeune (RIOU)

AMICE logo conception : Olivier Drogue

## Happy New Year!