

Connecting people for better water management



AWARE Newsletter N°3

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What is AWARE?

AWARE's focus is on human-caused deterioration of coastal water ecosystems. The project engages scientists, policy makers and the public in jointly creating and analysing scenarios for improved water management in coastal areas.

AWARE's participatory approach is crucial: it develops further the concept of integrated adaptive ecosystem management, by creating active roles for public participation. This strengthens the consultations between local residents, research and policy communities and facilitates common strategies.

The project implements this approach in three case studies:

- the coastal waters of the Gulf of Riga (Estonia and Latvia),
- the Seine, Somme, and Schelder river basins and the Southern North Sea coastal zone (France and Belgium),
- and the Po river Delta and Goro lagoon (Italy).





Aware Local Workshops

North Sea

On 8-9 October 2010, the ten French and Belgian citizens of the AWARE project took part in a workshop hosted by the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). Together with scientists and local policy actors, they discussed the environmental situation of the southern North Sea coastal marine waters. During two full and intensive days, the citizens exchanged views and developed opinions on solutions to better the management of the water ecosystem in their coastal area. They had the opportunity to discuss their ideas with local policy-makers, key institutional representatives, as well as NGO representatives and local stakeholders from tourism, farming, and fisheries. By the end of the workshop, the citizens developed a declaration expressing their reflections and recommendations for a better and more sustainable management of the local coastal and marine water ecosystem. They also provided to the scientist team involved in the project some recommendations for their environmental models. The input from the workshop will be presented at the AWARE Local Conference in Dunkerque on 7 January 2011.

Sacca di Goro

The Local Workshop of the Sacca di Goro case study took place on the 15-16 October, at the Province Research Center in Goro. Around thirty people, including local stakeholders, citizens and AWARE partners, attended the workshop on the first day. The workshop included diverse activities with a focus on scientific presentations about the Goro ecosystem situation and various governance instruments. On the second day, the workshop included only the group of AWARE citizens who focused on the identification of options of intervention. These options for improving the Sacca di Goro coastal waters formed the basis for the citizens' Statement. The group was strongly committed to the citizens' mandate and they underlined their intention to involve other citizens and to disseminate the results, in order to raise awareness on the lagoon's ecosystem problems. The two day workshop also underlined the importance of maintaining a strong link between scientists, citizens and stakeholders.

Gulf of Riga

The Local Workshop for the Gulf of Riga took place on 29-30 October in Jurmala, a sea-side town located close to Riga. The two day event brought together ten citizens from Latvia and Estonia, who discussed the state of the Gulf of Riga's ecosystem with scientists, stakeholders, and policy-makers. On the basis of a previous workshop, and together with local

and international scientists working on the topic, the citizen panel developed a more in-depth knowledge on the state of the coastal waters. The group also discussed the Gulf of Riga from the point of view of local stakeholders from agriculture, fisheries, and the tourism sector. Throughout the two days the citizen panel formulated recommendations on improving communication and decision-making on various aspects of the Gulf of Riga's coastal waters. Important was not just increasing public participation in the water management process, but also the trust in the citizens to make sound, sustainable decisions.

AWARE Local Conferences

Sacca di Goro

Sacca di Goro's Local Conference took place on 12 November in Canneviè, near the Po river delta, and was hosted by the Province of Ferrara. Around 60 people attended the Conference, including AWARE partners and the panel of ten selected citizens. The conference was an occasion for constructive, wider communication about the state of Sacca di Goro's ecosystem, described from different points of view. The contribution of local stakeholders and scientists animated the debate around the citizens' Statement. Starting from the positive experiences of the European and Local Workshops, the Statement strongly declares the importance of awareness and communication and prioritizes interventions to be discussed for a Sacca di Goro participatory management approach. Local policy-makers spoke of the great ecological and social value of the territory and underlined the significance of the methodological approach pursued by AWARE.

Gulf of Riga

The Local Conference took place on 1 November at the Latvian Ministry of the Environment, in Riga. About 60 participants attended the event, including AWARE project partners, local stakeholders, policy-makers, and most of the AWARE citizen panel. Participants received a broad understanding of the scientific and policy status of the coastal waters in the Gulf of Riga. The highlight of the conference was a panel discussion, which allowed scientists, AWARE citizens, and policy-makers to interact intimately on various aspects of decision-making and knowledge development. The experience highlighted the opportunities as well as the challenges that lie in bridging the communities of scientists and policy-makers. Participants acknowledged the strength of the AWARE participatory methodology in increasing the level of understanding between the actors present.

For more detailed information about these local events please see the dedicated page on the AWARE website:

www.aware-eu.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=71&Itemid=66



Gulf of Riga

On 18 June, the Helsinki Commission on the protection of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM) unveiled the **National Implementation Programmes (NIPs)** of its Member States to achieve the objectives of the strategic HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan to radically reduce pollution to the marine environment and restore its good ecological status by 2021. The HELCOM Member States have also agreed to work on halting the decline of biodiversity, ensuring environmentally safe maritime activities and response capacity, and increasing awareness-raising according to the objectives of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

For more information on NIPs see:

www.helcom.fi/BSAP/Implementation/en_GB/Implementation

HELCOM is also seeking to designate the region a **nitrogen oxides (NOx) emission control** area under the UN's Marpol convention. A proposal will be finalised at a meeting in March next year. The plan would cut NOx emissions from ships in the Baltic by about 80% compared with current levels, and thus substantially reduce eutrophication.

For more information see:

www.helcom.fi/press_office/news_helcom/en_GB/Maritime_9

On 12 August, the Estonian Government approved a regulation to designate the **Gretagrund Shelf** as a special conservation area. This shallow sea area in the Gulf of Riga has with unique species and habitats. The protected area covers about 14,650 ha and is located in the South-East of Ruhnu island.

For more information see these articles (Estonian only):

www.envir.ee/1134013 and www.epl.ee/artikkel/487861

The **Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication (PURE)** runs from December 2009-2012, and tackles the Baltic Sea eutrophication by enhancing phosphorus removal in selected municipal waste water treatment plants in the Baltic Sea Region. For more information on PURE project activities regarding waste water treatment in Riga and Jurmala please see:

www.purebalticsea.eu

On 28 October the European **Marine Strategy Framework Directive** was transposed into Latvian Law and adopted by the Parliament. The Marine Directive and the Helsinki Commission Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) work on a common goal of achieving 'good environmental status' of the Gulf of Riga, by 2021. For more information see:

www.vidm.gov.lv/eng

North Sea

The Norwegian Ministry of the Environment hosted the Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR Commission in Bergen, Norway, 23-24 September 2010. The OSPAR Commission works to protect and conserve the North-East Atlantic and its resources.

During the OSPAR Commission's Ministerial Meeting, the North-East Atlantic Environment Summit, OSPAR made ground breaking decisions, including the establishment of a vast network of unique and ecologically sensitive areas in the wider Atlantic. By adopting the Bergen Statement, the OSPAR Ministers committed to achieve a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic used sustainably.

For the results of the summit please see:

www.ospar.org

Sacca di Goro

On July 10 news came that the peninsula of Boscoforte, in the Parco Delta del Po (Emilia-Romagna), will be again open to the public during the next years. In order to maintain the unpolluted equilibrium of this area, guided tours will be provided to groups, and the public will be able to visit Boscoforte on a 2 km pedestrian nature trail. For more information (Italian only) please see:

www.parcodeltapo.it/er/notizie/comunicati/dettaglio.php?id=9973

On 19 November, Francesco Tornatore – a member of the AWARE policy and science advisory board – spoke at the Informative Forum concerning the Basin Water Balance Plan. For the formulation of the Po River Water Balance Plan, the Basin Authority intends to activate a participatory process structured along three dimensions of participation: access to information, consultation, and active participation. This first Informative Forum is a way for the Basin Authority of the Po River to start the debate and to share with stakeholders the key directions to be included into the Water Balance Plan. Furthermore, workshops on specific themes will be offered, and are open to all.

www.adbpo.it/on-multi/ADBPO/Home/PianodiBilancioIdrico/Informazioneconsultazioneepartecipazione/documento13014.html



Upcoming Events and Activities

Following the successful Local Workshop in Bruxelles, and the two Local Conferences in the sister case studies of Gulf of Riga and Sacca di Goro, **the Local Conference for the North Sea** will take place on 7 January 2011. The event will be hosted by the Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque Grand Littoral. For further information, please contact Fanny Gleize at fanny.gleize@missionspubliques.com.

The next **European level Workshop** will take place on 28-30 April, 2011. This workshop will bring together the three citizen panels, who have been engaged in local workshops and conferences. The event will act as a synthesis of these experiences and will allow the thirty citizens representing three different case studies to work together on recommendations that can be applicable on the European policy level.

The **AWARE European Conference** will be hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee, and will take place on 9 June in Brussels. This conference will offer the opportunity for the three citizen panels to present their final recommendations to a body of European policy-makers and to interact with interested stakeholders.



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Milestones

- 🗨️ · Kick-off meeting
- 📄 · Website launch
- 🗨️ · Field visit of case study Sacca Di Goro
- 📄 · Gulf of Riga Inception reports launch
- 📄 · Sacca di Goro Inception reports launch
- 📄 · North Sea Inception reports launch
- 📄 · Newsletter launch
- 🗨️ · Citizen panel recruitment
- 🗨️ · First EU citizen workshop
- 🗨️ · First advisory group meeting
- 🗨️ · Gulf of Riga local workshop
- 🗨️ · Sacca di Goro local workshop
- 🗨️ · North Sea local workshop
- 📄 · Case study survey reports launch
- 🗨️ · Gulf of Riga local conference
- 🗨️ · Sacca di Goro local conference

- 🗨️ · North Sea local conference
- 📄 · Case study reports launch
- 🗨️ · Second EU citizen workshop
- 📄 · EU level survey reports launch
- 🗨️ · EU level conference
- 🗨️ · Second advisory group meeting
- 🗨️ · Evaluation workshop
- 🗨️ · Third advisory group meeting

